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WORDS AND MUSIC IN THE *CANTIGAS DE SANTA MARIA* -  
THE *CANTIGAS* AS SONG

*Alison D Campbell*  
*MA (Hons) Hispanic Studies/Music*

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the  
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Department of Music  
College of Arts  
University of Glasgow

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## ABSTRACT

The *Cantigas de Santa Maria* represent one of the largest and best-documented song collections to come out of medieval Europe, with pieces preserved in up to three manuscripts. The close degree of agreement between the sources gives this collection a more stable and unified nature than other contemporary repertoires and its size - at over 400 pieces - makes it a potentially rich resource for studying medieval song. However, a history of split editions - i.e. predominantly text-focused or music-focused - has meant that the texts and melodies have rarely been given the same degree of scrutiny, and the relationship between them is still unclear. Existing literature on the *Cantigas* has seldom been able to address both aspects at once, and if the collection's status as song is referred to, it is usually at the level of vague contextual statements such as "they must have been performed at Alfonso X's court". In short, the *Cantigas* have rarely been studied in detail as *song*.

This thesis will argue that song represents an important axis for understanding this repertory. Chapter 1 will start by surveying the basic characteristics of textual and musical structure, taking in both large-scale forms such as *virelai* and *zajal* and smaller-scale structures, as well as techniques used in composition. This will also help to situate the *Cantigas* in the context of other related repertoires, such as those of the Occitan and Galician-Portuguese troubadours. Chapter 2 asks "What can song do for the *Cantigas*?": it will first look at the text-music relationship, before going on to consider the impact of performance, and the difference that granting the pieces their status as song can make to established views both of the manuscript sources and the motivations behind the collection. This second chapter will treat song as a tool for "unlocking" aspects of the collection that have not yet been covered fully in the literature. Chapter 3, by contrast, will use the *Cantigas* as a starting point for a broader examination of song itself. It will ask what the experience of studying medieval repertoires such as the *Cantigas*, and the specific types of song they represent, can do for our understanding of song as a general phenomenon. After considering the fundamental question "What makes a song?" it will seek to lay down a theoretical background for this discussion, consider existing models (especially those presented by Agawu in his 1992 article "Theory and practice in the analysis of the nineteenth-century Lied") and conclude by offering its own set of exploratory definitions.

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**CONTENTS**

<i>Abstracts</i>	2
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	3
<i>Introduction</i>	5
<i>Chapter 1: Basics of textual and musical structure in the Cantigas</i>	10
<i>Chapter 2: What can song do for the Cantigas?</i>	59
<i>Chapter 3: What makes a song? Issues of text-music relations</i>	111
<i>Conclusions</i>	147
<i>Bibliography</i>	151

## INTRODUCTION

The *Cantigas de Santa Maria* represent one of the largest and best-documented song collections to come out of medieval Europe. Compiled at the court of King Alfonso X of Castile and Leon during the latter part of the thirteenth century, they present miracle stories of the Virgin Mary - some gathered from around Europe and the Iberian peninsula, others newly composed - reworked into Galician-Portuguese verse and set to music. These narratives are interspersed in a highly structured pattern with more general praise pieces in the Virgin's honour to create a fitting tribute, not only to her but also to its royal patron, Alfonso X "el Sabio", whose devotion and sponsorship of learned enterprises are thereby advertised. Each piece, text and music, is preserved in up to three of the collection's four manuscripts: the close degree of agreement between the sources gives this collection a more stable and unified nature than other contemporary repertories, and its size - at over 400 pieces - makes it a potentially rich resource for studying medieval song. However, a history of split editions, i.e. predominantly text-focused *or* music-focused, has meant that the texts and melodies have rarely received the same degree of scrutiny at the same time: as a result, many aspects of the relationship between them are still unclear. Similarly, existing literature on the *Cantigas* has seldom been able to address both elements at once, and where the collection's status as song has been referred to, it has often either been at the level of vague contextual statements such as "they must have been performed at Alfonso X's court", or acknowledged quickly before moving on. In short: the *Cantigas* have rarely been studied in detail *as song*, in the sense of a single entity embracing both words and music. While advancements have been made in other areas (such as the relationship between the manuscripts or the links with source miracle collections), the picture in this key area remains sketchy.

The *Cantigas* are preserved in four manuscripts - *E*, *T*, *To* and *F* - which together represent three stages of the collection's evolution (see Ferreira, 1994; Parkinson, 1987, 1988, 1998a, 2000a; Schaffer, 1991, 1995, 1999, 2000). The earliest stage is represented by *To*, although the surviving manuscript has been thought by some to

be a later copy rather than the original (e.g. Anglés, 1943-64; but see Ferreira, 1994, and Parkinson, 2000c, for the contrary view). This contains an initial collection of 100 pieces, arranged so that every tenth piece is a *loor* (general song of praise) while the rest are *miragres* (narrative poems telling stories of miracles performed by the Virgin); later this was added to through the inclusion of two appendices of *cantigas de festas* (in honour of the Virgin and *Nostro Sennor* respectively) as well as a small group of additional pieces (both *miragres* and *loores*). In terms of design it is the most basic of the *Cantigas* sources, containing texts and melodies but no illustrations. The second stage is represented by *T*, where the original collection is doubled in size to 200 pieces. The manuscript design here is much more elaborate, with each piece accompanied by a set of miniatures (normally six) illustrating the story of that *cantiga*. The alternation of nine *miragres* to one *loor* is preserved - as it will be through all the incarnations of the collection - but to this numerological concern are added a number of layout-driven ones: most notably, that every fifth piece gets a double spread of miniatures so has to be long enough to support this (see Parkinson, 2000a on the role of these “quints”, especially in some of the re-ordering that takes place between these two versions of the collection). At the third stage, a decision is taken to expand the collection further, this time to 400 pieces. Manuscript *F* is begun as a companion volume to *T*, following the same principles of design and layout, to present this expansion. The two-volume *T/F* (the *códices ricos*) was clearly intended as a luxury, prestige version of the collection; however, as Schaffer (2000) notes, this was time-consuming to produce so at some point manuscript *E* is compiled to house a less elaborate version of the 400-song collection envisaged by *T/F*. The layout of *E* is very much simpler than that of the *códices ricos*, although it still contains small miniatures depicting instrumentalists of various types marking each of the *loores* (making it an important source of information about medieval instruments). This came to be a prescient decision, as time pressures on the *Cantigas* project appear to have increased towards the end of Alfonso’s reign; manuscript *F* was ultimately left unfinished with only 104 pieces, staves with no music and miniatures in varying stages of construction. While the other manuscripts are much more complete, Schaffer (2000) points out that signs of disruption are found also in the latter stages

of *E* and at various points through *T* i.e. the only one of the *Cantigas* sources that is truly “complete in itself” is the earliest version, *To*.

If the collection represented a large-scale enterprise for Alfonso and his compilers, it has proved no less so for its modern editors (which may go some way to explaining the scarcity of complete editions over the years). There are three complete text editions: two by Walter Mettmann (his Castalia edition of 1986-88 and his earlier Coimbra edition of 1959-72) and the other by the Marqués de Valmar, which dates from 1888. The more recent Mettmann edition is the main one used, but it draws in large part upon his earlier one and both have their drawbacks: the Coimbra edition is more comprehensive in its critical apparatus but in its texts makes less interpretation of what it finds in the manuscripts (so that trivial variants are accorded similar status to more significant ones); the Castalia edition, meanwhile, is more decisive in its handling of the text, but makes some mistakes in doing so and its critical apparatus has been cut down to the point where it cannot be relied upon to give an accurate picture of the variants found. The only complete musical edition of the *Cantigas* remains that of Higinio Anglés from 1943 - a great musicological achievement but very much a product of its time, for instance in its focus on and handling of the question of musical rhythm. Anglés was looking to use the *Cantigas* as a key to unlock forms and rhythms in other medieval European secular song repertoires, and his edition is very much coloured by the theory of rhythmic modes prevailing at the time (musicology has since moved on). There are currently no complete editions covering both text and music,<sup>1</sup> and neither of the main editions is satisfactory in its treatment of the “other” component. Other than a brief mention in the introduction, the Mettmann Castalia edition makes no reference to the music at all, while Anglés (as was not uncommon for editions of large medieval song repertoires) gives only the refrain and the first stanza of each text. This immediately makes comparisons between words and music difficult, and matters are not helped by the Anglés edition being based on the 1888 Valmar text (the only one available at the time). Much of Anglés’s structural analysis is based on the text divisions from the Valmar edition, which adopts them more or less wholesale from manuscript *E*. Mettmann’s structural analyses suffer in some cases from his lack of awareness of the music (which might have flagged up problems



with the structures he presents; see Parkinson, 1987 for some examples). One aspect in which the two editions come together is in their preference for *E* as base manuscript; however, this creates a different set of problems. While *E* is certainly the most complete of the *Cantigas* manuscripts in terms of the number of pieces it contains, this does not suffice to make it the “best” source. It is actually the least careful of the manuscripts with regard to text structure and marking of elisions; as outlined above, this could be due to the circumstances of its production and/or its position relative to the other manuscripts making up the *Cantigas* project (e.g. competing demands from those working on *T/F*). While the focus on *E* is more understandable for Anglés, working at a time when *F* had only just been discovered and *To* was thought to be the latest of the sources chronologically, it is less so for Mettmann, whose reluctance to diverge from *E* leads him to ignore patently superior line versions from *T* and *To* while only grudgingly (and in some cases partially) correcting its errors of structure. Neither of these editions provides the critical apparatus which would allow this bias to be reversed.

These difficulties with the main editions notwithstanding, this thesis contends that song - understood in its most basic sense as a meaningful combination of words and music - represents an important axis for understanding this repertory. Chapter 1 will start by surveying the basic characteristics of textual and musical structure, taking in both large-scale forms such as *virelai* and *zajal* and smaller-scale structures, as well as techniques used in composition. This will also help to situate the *Cantigas* in the context of other related repertories, such as those of the Occitan and Galician-Portuguese troubadours.<sup>2</sup> Chapter 2 goes on to ask “What can song do for the *Cantigas*?”: it will first look at the text-music relationship from a number of different standpoints, before going on to consider the impact of performance, and the difference that granting the pieces their status as song can make to established views both of the manuscript sources and the motivations behind the collection. In this second chapter, song will be used as a tool for “unlocking” those aspects of the collection that have not yet been adequately covered in the literature. Chapter 3, by contrast, will take the *Cantigas* as a starting point for a broader examination of song itself. It will ask what the experience of studying medieval repertories such as the *Cantigas*, and the specific

types of song they represent, can do for our understanding of song as a general phenomenon. After considering the fundamental question “What makes a song?”, it will seek to lay down a theoretical background for this discussion, consider existing models (especially those presented by Agawu in his 1992 article “Theory and practice in the analysis of the nineteenth-century Lied”) and conclude by offering its own set of exploratory definitions. It is hoped that together these three chapters will provide a fuller picture of text-music relations in the *Cantigas* than has hitherto been available, and contribute to our understanding of how items in the collection may be regarded as songs rather than as arbitrary products of a set of verses and associated melodies.

## Notes

1. There have been a number of partial textual or musical editions over the years, such as Elvira Fidalgo’s 2004 edition of the texts of the *loores*, Martin Cunningham’s 2000 musical performing edition of the same corpus, or Jesús Montoya Martínez’s 1999 edition of the subgroup of miracles associated with the Porto de Santa Maria, as well as occasional editions of individual pieces or small groups of pieces e.g. in anthologies. However, none of these smaller editions have been able to displace the Mettmann/Anglés editions - partly for the obvious reasons of scope, but also because they have not resulted in significant advances in terms of the handling of the material (despite the different methods and stances adopted).
2. Comparison with other medieval repertoires is vital for understanding a collection like the *Cantigas* - it helps us to contextualise what we find, both in terms of understanding features and practices and alerting us to compositional possibilities we might not otherwise have noticed. Such comparisons are not always easy to realise, however, given the differing states of evidence and completeness across different repertoires e.g. the Galician-Portuguese troubadour repertory consists of a few thousand poems, but only thirteen melodies have survived along with them. Within the scope of this thesis, it will not be possible to engage in a detailed comparison with all the medieval repertoires that might have some relevance for the *Cantigas*. As the focus here is on describing practices within the collection itself, the main repertoires picked out will be those that feed into the CSM in this respect (rather than those that run parallel to it but with less connection, or come after it in time). As a result, there will be more focus on “close” or “contributing” repertoires such as the two bodies of troubadour pieces mentioned, rather than more “remote” ones such as the Italian *laude* whose surviving music dates from after the *Cantigas*, even though they may share similar techniques and preoccupations.

## CHAPTER 1: BASICS OF TEXTUAL AND MUSICAL STRUCTURE IN THE *CANTIGAS*

This chapter will seek to establish the basic characteristics of textual and musical structure in the *Cantigas*. Although it may seem trite to say so, patterns and structure are very important for the *CSM* as a corpus. Whether it be the overall structuring device of one *loor* to nine *miragres*, or the layout-driven need to have longer *cantigas* as the intermediate fifth pieces (stemming from the two ornamental manuscripts *T* and *F*), textual and musical structures are very visible throughout, while the presence of obvious templates (such *zajal* and *virelai*) seems to offer scholars a clarity not often found in repertories of this period. Add in the degree of agreement between the manuscripts and the opportunity to study features over a large body of material, and we have a corpus that is potentially a very rich source of information for the study of medieval song. However, these “clear” structures may be something of a mixed blessing - issues of “mismatch” between these two dominant templates have caused confusion for some commentators in attempting to extrapolate from one type of structure to another; for example, see Mettmann’s comments in the introduction to his 1986-1989 edition (p. 41) on how to adapt his rhyme-based presentation of the texts in the light of the musical structures.

This chapter will look at the main elements of textual and musical structure, both large and small-scale. The aim will be to uncover some of the fundamental choices behind the collection - which structures to adopt, which traditions to follow and so on. We will also be looking at how the structures play out in practice, and the relationship between form and content. I will consider text and music separately here so as to be better able to draw out the salient characteristics of each, but we will return to consider the question of their combination in Chapter 2.

## *Musical structure in the Cantigas*

### *Large-scale musical structure*

The strength of the dominance of the *virelai* as the leading large-scale form in the collection should not be underestimated. Gerardo Huseby (1983, p. 87) claimed that all but 32 pieces could be resolved back to a basic *virelai* form, and the number of pieces that are clearly in other forms (e.g. refrainless forms or *rondeaux*) is smaller still: fewer than twenty out a collection of over four hundred. That such forms are found in the collection indicates that they were known to its creators/compilers and could have been included in greater numbers; yet the preference is overwhelmingly for the *virelai*. It is not clear why this should have been chosen as the standard “musical template” for the CSM, but its influence can be seen throughout - for example, in the occasional attempt to force other types of piece to fit the template (e.g. see the *E* scribes’ mangling of the refrainless #340 noted by Parkinson<sup>1</sup>). Even Anglés, in the “Musical form” column of the tables in his 1958 commentary, includes such forms as “No es virelai”, “Musicalmente no es virelai” and “Propriamente no es virelai” among those he lists, showing the dominance of the form for his thinking.

Nevertheless, the Cantigas present some challenges for our view of the *virelai*, often defined on the basis of the form that would emerge as one of the three *formes fixes* that characterise the French repertory of the early fourteenth century i.e. after the time of the Cantigas. The basic form is normally given as  $A \rightarrow b \ b \ a \rightarrow A$  (or  $A \ B \rightarrow c \ c \ a \ b \rightarrow A \ B$ ), where [A] represents the refrain, [b b] the contrasting *mudanzas* section - normally consisting of something repeated - and [a] the *vuelta* section, where the music of the refrain returns but this time accompanying stanza text. This is followed by the return of the refrain [A] itself. It should be noted that this is predominantly a musical form i.e. it does not prescribe what shape the accompanying text should be. Nor does it prescribe what the dimensions of the different sections should be, either individually or in relation to one another, apart from the refrain and *vuelta* which might be expected to be matched in size as they use the same music. As such, it offers considerable flexibility within the overall template of the form. It

is also important to remember that the *virelai* is a rolling form i.e. the refrain (hereafter referred to as R) is succeeded by the *mudanzas* (M) and the *vuelta* (V), which in turn is succeeded by the refrain again. A “typical” example (#156) which demonstrates these structural relations is shown in Figure 1.

Such straightforward examples are rare, however. When we look at the collection, we see the *CSM* pieces taking full advantage of the flexibility available in the *virelai* form. We find considerable variety of line lengths and text patterns: as well as refrains consisting of the common four or two phrase-units, we also find occasional examples with one or three phrase-units, or sometimes even more if the text structure presents a succession of smaller rhymed units that are mirrored in the refrain setting. We see larger refrains/*vueltas* matched with smaller *mudanzas* and vice versa. The contrast at the *mudanzas* is often achieved by a switch to a different part of the mode - e.g. for a piece based on  $d$ ,<sup>2</sup> moving to the area around  $a$  before returning to the region of the “home note” at the *vuelta* - but not necessarily so, with some pieces remaining in the same tonal ambit throughout. There is even one case (#038) of what looks like a change of rhythmic pattern, from duple to triple rhythm, for the *mudanzas*. Many of the R, M and V sections found in the *Cantigas* use open/closed structures, adding to the delineation of the different parts of the form, but it is also possible for refrains/*vueltas* to be through-composed i.e. with no overt phrase-level relationship between the constituent phrase-units. A piece can have an open/closed structure in R/V but not M, and vice versa, while the cadences from an open/closed structure in R/V can be re-used with new filler material to form M. Alternatively, the R/V section can follow the pattern of the *mudanzas* and be made up of a paired structure i.e. something which is immediately repeated - AA or AB AB, say. Add in the presence of smaller-scale motivic links throughout the *CSM* melodies (such as the matching patterns at the start of R1/R3 and R2/R4 in #156) alongside this formal variety, and the clarity of pure phrase- and section-based repetition quickly becomes complicated.

R1 A Ma- dre do que de ter- ra

R2 pri- meir' o- me foi fa- zer

R3 ben pod' a lin- gua ta- lla- da

R4 fa- zer que po- ssa cre- cer.

M1 Dest'un mui ma- ra- vi- llo- so

M2 mi- ra- gre vos con- ta- rey

M3 = M1 que fez, e mui pi- a- do- so

M4 = M2 a Ma- dre do al- to Rei

V1 = R1 por un cre- ri- go que fo- ran

V2 = R2 a furt' e- re- ges pren- der

V3 = R3 por- que de San- ta Ma- ri- a

V4 = R4 sempr'y- a lo- or di- zer

Figure 1. #156 (Anglés, 1943, p. 169) showing the characteristic *virelai* structure of four refrain phrases R1-R4, followed by four *mudanza* phrases M1-M4 and four *vuelta* phrases V1-V4 (p = note written as plica)

If exact mechanical repetition of phrases is rarely found throughout the length of a piece, this makes it difficult for analysis that operates primarily at the level of the phrase - such as that found in the Anglés edition - to adequately capture melodic structure. It is not enough just to be able to mark one phrase as a variant of another: there may be multiple overlapping relationships at different levels. A phrase may be an exact repetition of something else found within the *virelai* structure, but it may also:

- have been transposed to another pitch level, with or without minor variations (compare phrases R2 and M2 of #183, for example);
- consist of an amalgam or putting-together of the front half of one phrase with the back half of another (e.g. #044, where the *mudanza* phrases are formed from the front half of R1 and the back half of R2);
- follow a similar pattern to another phrase because the two form the open and closed halves of an open/closed structure (see #156 above);
- be a close relative of another phrase in the overall structure i.e. clear enough for the second phrase to be recognizable as a version of the first with minor differences, such as cases of variant openings, shortened versions or added ornamentation (e.g. compare the last two phrases of the refrain of #006 with the first two phrases of the *mudanza*);
- or simply share some material in common - an opening or cadence motif, a decorative figure, or perhaps pass in a similar way through a particular section of the mode - without this being extensive enough to mark the new phrase in its entirety as being a variant of something that has gone before.

Because of the potential for these relationships to overlap, any categorization that can only mark “sameness” and “difference” will struggle to reflect fully the different levels of melodic structure that the collection contains. However, the *virelai* as it presents itself in the *Cantigas* is still predominantly a phrase-based structure i.e. its sections consist of phrase-units or clearly identifiable groups of phrase-units (often corresponding to the structure of the text). What is needed, therefore, is a richer perspective that can recognize the diverse and overlapping structures within the *virelai* form.

Another aspect in which the *Cantigas* present a challenge is in the content of the *mudanzas* section. The Spanish term (plural, from the verb *MUDAR* = to change) reflects the standard view of this part of the *virelai* structure: that it should represent a contrast with what has gone before, and that it should consist of something repeated. This could be achieved through the introduction of new and unrelated melodic material, possibly accompanied by a change of pitch range or level, and there are plenty of pieces in the CSM collection that do demonstrate this type of contrast (like #156 above). However, as the different types of relationships listed above show, the potential for overlap between the material for R/V and the material for M is actually quite high. A tightly-bound melodic structure created by the occurrence of smaller motives is characteristic of many pieces, even among phrases which are considered contrasting at the larger scale. Whether this involves the amalgam technique described above, the re-use of cadences or common openings, or less extensive motivic patterns, it can mean that the degree of contrast between the refrain/*vuelta* and *mudanzas* sections is less than might be “expected” from the form as it would crystallise in later repertoires. This is a consequence of musical creativity on the part of the creators of the *Cantigas* - the skilful forging of connections between phrases and sections so that they form a coherent whole. As such, it is something that any description of melodic structure in the collection must be able to accommodate. Daniel Leech-Wilkinson (1996, p. 130) summarises this as “exactly the opposite technique to offering a B section which contrasts ... but also a perfectly logical reading of the *virelai* form”. This type of linkage is so common in the *Cantigas* that it suggests (in agreement with Leech-Wilkinson) that those behind the melodies did not regard it as conflicting in any way with the larger structures present. Rather, many of these variations seem to operate on a complementary level, helping to link successive phrases with familiar material as we move through the overall structure.

The play of “sameness” vs. “difference” is at the heart of the *virelai* as the musical sections alternate and succeed one another: we hear a portion of melody, then something that moves away from it before it comes back, this time with new text, then again as the familiar refrain. It is an inherently repetitive form, but there is no reason to expect this repetition to be mechanical or to confine itself to overly stringent limits. What the form offers is an overall



framework within which the creator of the piece can exercise his/her imagination as to smaller-scale melodic structure, using all the resources at his/her disposal: as Leech-Wilkinson (1996, p. 140) puts it with respect to the *virelais* of Guillaume de Machaut, “ABBAA is just a blank cheque ... We can see Machaut filling in cheques in an impressive variety of ways”.<sup>3</sup> However, the *Cantigas* take things one step further with a significant number of pieces - more than 70 according to Ferreira (2000, p. 9) - which re-use an entire phrase or phrases from the refrain to form the *mudanza* phrase(s). The re-used phrase is normally R2 rather than R1 in the case of a two-phrase refrain, or if the refrain consists of four phrases it can either be the pair of phrases R3 and R4 (recapitulating the back half of the refrain) or R1 and R4 (giving a compressed version of the refrain). This gives a form of  $A B \rightarrow b b a b \rightarrow A B$  (as opposed to  $A B \rightarrow c c a b \rightarrow A B$ ) - a form which Ferreira has called the “Andalusian rondeau” (2000, p. 9). He argues that this should be regarded as a separate form, alongside the *virelai*, in the collection and that it might reflect Andalusian origins (potentially) for both forms.

Ferreira may well be right about possible Andalusian (note: Andalusian rather than classical Arabic) influence on form in the *Cantigas*. As we shall see, the commonest stanza pattern in the texts is that of the *zajal* (Sp. *zéjel*) i.e. stanzas rhyming  $a a a b$ , with the  $b$  rhyme echoing those of the refrain. It has already been noted that the *Cantigas* date from a period before the *virelai* emerged as a fixed form in France so it is unlikely that the choice was influenced from the other side of the Pyrenees. Evidence is scarce for the musical form of the medieval *zajal* or its more symmetrical relative, the *muwashshah* (stanzas rhyming  $a a b b$ ), but the forms that survive in present-day oral traditions which share an Andalusian background (such as the *muwashshah*, *zajal* or the Moroccan *nawba*; Ferreira, 2004, pp. 136-139) suggest that it may have been a plausible route of transmission. Ferreira is also right to note that examples of the French *rondeau* ( $A B \rightarrow a A a A a b \rightarrow A B$ , where it is the first musical phrase of the refrain that provides the main repetition at the stanza) are relatively uncommon in the collection, with only five pieces. However, in his descriptions of *rondeau* as a structure he has omitted the repeated refrain lines that are normally found mid-stanza - as they are in all the instances of French *rondeau* found in the *Cantigas*, with the refrain line repetitions marked in the sources. This suggests

that the creator/compiler of the collection were already familiar with the French *rondeau* as a form and saw it as something distinct from the *virelai*. I have been unable to find any examples with a musical structure of  $A B \rightarrow a a a b \rightarrow A B$  in the collection i.e. of this type of *rondeau* without intercalated refrain lines - the closest I could find was #090 which has the melodic structure  $A B \rightarrow a b a b a' c \rightarrow A B$ , but this is a piece with unusual amount of parallelism in its text and the musical setting may well reflect that.<sup>4</sup>

While it is possible to regard the “Andalusian *rondeau*” as a distinct form, existing alongside the *virelai*, it should be noted the two are not entirely incompatible. If we relax the expectation that the *mudanzas* should consist of new and contrasting material - which as we have seen may not exactly be the case, even for phrases which are ultimately judged as being different - then it is possible for the “Andalusian *rondeau*” to fit within the template found in the *Cantigas* i.e. it has a refrain, a *mudanzas* section consisting of something repeated and a *vuelta* which recapitulates the material from the refrain. Instead of the contrasts of  $A \rightarrow b b a \rightarrow A$ , what we have is more  $R \rightarrow M (= x x) V \rightarrow R$ , where the  $x$  may be something new or it may be something we have heard at an earlier point in the structure - whether repeated exactly in this version or overlapping in part. As such, I would prefer to see this as one step further along the path of linkages outlined above. If we can have a phrase that is constructed out of the front half of one phrase and the back half of another, or a phrase that is a very close variant of a previous one, without this being considered to be in conflict with *virelai* form, then might not the re-use of an entire phrase be the next logical step? This is supported by cases of near re-use of  $R$  material to form  $M$ , where the only difference between the two phrases consists in the removal or alteration of decorative motifs (compare #416  $M2$  and  $R3$ ), or small changes of pitch - e.g.  $g f g$  for  $f f g$  in the middle of a phrase, as in #236 - for the version of the phrase that appears in  $M$ . Often there are no obvious reasons, textual or musical, for these changes and their effect, at most, is either to weight the phrase slightly differently or to provide a marginally more dynamic/decorated version. When they appear systematically, the most convincing explanation would appear to be that they represent “change for contrast’s sake” i.e. a nod in the direction of the contrasting function of  $M$ . We should also note that once the effect of open/closed structures are discounted, through-composed

*mudanzas* sections are exceedingly rare - #100 is the only example I have been able to find. The overwhelming preference is for paired forms i.e. something which is immediately repeated, suggesting that this was a more important aspect of the *virelai* form for the creators/compiler of the *Cantigas* melodies.

It is not just in terms of the *mudanzas* that the *Cantigas* force us to reconsider our view of the *virelai*. The *vuelta* section, which should correspond to the music of the refrain, can also show a greater degree of variation in its content than might be anticipated from the form. The commonest pattern is for all three sections to match in size; next, for the *mudanzas* to be a different size to the other two (larger or smaller, but always an even number of phrases). However, there is a group of around 35 pieces in which the number of phrases in the refrain and *vuelta* do not match, forcing a change in the musical structure. Sometimes this is because of differences in the dimensions of the sections: #025 has a two-phrase refrain but a four-phrase refrain and *vuelta*, the latter simply repeating the pair of refrain phrases to achieve the extra length. Similarly #150, whose *vuelta* is half the size of its refrain, adapts by cutting out the middle two phrases. Where the text structures are congruent i.e. the line lengths and types match or can be fitted inside each other, such straightforward solutions are possible. More challenging situations are faced, however, by those pieces which contain non-congruent structures. #300, for example, faces the problem of the line lengths being different in its six-phrase *vuelta* to those in its four-phrase refrain - four and seven-syllable lines rather than the consistent six syllables found in the refrain. Cases like these show more complicated solutions, stretching out their refrain material to accommodate larger *vueltras* by interpolating new motifs, altering phrase boundaries, and recontextualizing open/closed and other cadences. Text structure appears to be the driving force behind many of these changes i.e. a choice has been made to abandon the normal congruence at this point in favour of a more complex textual pattern, with consequences for the musical form.

The common factor, however, is the element of return at V - even if it is not the complete recapitulation envisaged by the form. Gerardo Huseby, in his 1983 discussion of musical and textual structures in the *Cantigas*, refers to “telescoped virelais ... in which only part of the music of the refrain is repeated

in the stanza” (p. 87). Faced with evidence from the collection, he is prepared to countenance a looser interpretation of the *virelai* structure with respect to the *vuelta* (and from the lists of structures given in his appendices, also with respect to the *mudanzas*). #037 provides an example of this type of partial recapitulation, demonstrating one of the ways in which this can be achieved: the extension of material from M into V. The *vuelta* phrase V1 begins with the same sequence of repeated *a*’s that we have just heard at the start of both the *mudanza* phrases, from where it then diverges (perhaps to avoid the move up from there to the top part of the mode, preferring instead to head back down to the region of the home note *d*). This “prolonging” of the *mudanzas* apart, what we get from there is effectively new material until the next phrase V2 picks up the final phrase of the refrain for the expected recapitulation. The introduction of entirely new material - at a point where we are expecting the return of something familiar - is another way in which the *Cantigas* push at the boundaries of the *virelai* form. There is a slight alteration at the beginning of the returning phrase to reflect the different pitch context of the transition this time round: while changes in the musical form can often be provoked by text structure, this may indicate some “purely musical” priorities at work i.e. the desire to create a smoother transition between M and V sections, especially if these cover different pitch ranges. In #037 we might have expected a degree of truncation as the *vuelta* has only two phrases to the the refrain’s three - but we can also see the same move in #096, which has no such pressure from text structure. The latter does, however, contain a small variant (*c c d c\_0* for *c c c c\_0* compared to M) which helps to mark this out as “same but different”. Minor pitch variants of this sort provide emphasis, and are sometimes used to pick out strategic points in the musical structure such as the change of section at V.

Whether it is the same material at M or new material at V, or the sheer variety of phrase structures and relationships on offer, the *Cantigas* often challenge and subvert our view of the *virelai* (at least as it was to crystallise in terms of later repertories). Yet as we go through the collection we find the same shapes and variations created by phrase-based repetition, occurring in different combinations and with different complicating factors from piece to piece, but pointing towards the same underlying musical form. I would therefore argue (following Huseby) that what we are looking at here is a looser template,

responding to a “stretched” or “expanded” *virelai* in which the “normal” distinctions of contrasting/recurring material between sections may not apply. It may be helpful to think of it as less a *virelai* than a *virelai type*, of the form  $R \rightarrow M (= x \ x) \ V \rightarrow R$  where  $M$  consists of something repeated and  $V$  contains some element of return of the material introduced at  $R$ . As Huseby has noted, once the effect of text structure and some of the musical variation is stripped away, the fact that only around 32 pieces (i.e. less than 10%) of such a large body of material are left outside this template - the five *rondeaux* and a selection of other pieces which either have no refrain, end refrain or stanzas that cannot securely be resolved down to a *virelai* pattern even on the looser template - suggests that we should take it seriously when analysing musical structure in the collection.

Two notes of caution need to be sounded at this point. The first is that the discussion above tends to assume that the *virelai* form of the *Cantigas* is through-composed i.e. that it develops from and responds to whatever body of material is laid out in  $R$ . This is because it appears to hold for the overwhelming majority of pieces, which make best sense viewed in this way. However, we do need to be aware that there are cases where this may not hold - either because the piece may be built around a pre-existing melody fitted to the stanza or because the refrain may be irregular in some way. So while it is normally safe to take  $R$  as the starting point of a rolling  $R \rightarrow M \rightarrow V \rightarrow R$ , with  $R$  coming first both in terms of what we hear and the unfolding of the musical form, we need to be alert to exceptions where  $R$  itself has been generated from something occurring “later” in the *virelai* structure. The second is that many of the features/changes on which this larger-scale form depends occur primarily at a much smaller scale, and it is to this that we will now turn.

### *Small-scale musical structure*

In her book *The music of the troubadours*, Elizabeth Aubrey acknowledges the key role that variants can play in developing our understanding of a piece:

An examination of the extrinsic and intrinsic variants can help us discover what kinds of changes might have occurred during different stages in the lives of the melodies. Although not every variant can be traced unequivocally to a composer, a

singer or a scribe, such an examination might uncover something about the compositional conventions and methods of the troubadours, about the performing techniques and aesthetics, about the talents and habits of the scribes, and about the nature of the songs themselves. (1996, p. 50).

Aubrey makes a distinction between what she calls “extrinsic variants” (large-scale differences stemming from a comparison of the sources, such as pieces transmitted with the same text but a different melody in different manuscripts) and “intrinsic variants”. These she describes as smaller-scale differences of musical material, both between sources and within the structure of an individual piece, which stem primarily from comparison of near-identical musical material at the level of the phrase or below. Aubrey’s distinction makes sense in the context of the troubadour repertory, where both types of variance are found and there can be a considerable degree of *mouvance* between the sources. The *Cantigas*, by contrast, have a negligible degree of extrinsic variance in the sense she is applying it; the biggest differences between manuscripts occur in the texts, but even these only extend to the recomposition of a small portion of the text (say a few stanzas at most). As far as the melodies are concerned, there are no cases of a piece being transmitted with more than one melody in different sources. Indeed the degree of correspondence between the *Cantigas* sources is one of the most striking features of the collection as a whole.

While the idea of extrinsic variance may be of limited use here, smaller scale-differences between the three musical sources do exist and seem to correspond quite neatly to Aubrey’s category of intrinsic variants. These occur “within short musical figures, often occupying the space of a single text syllable” (1996, p. 50) i.e. right down to the minimum level of detail that we can discern from the written source.<sup>5</sup> *Virelai* structure itself generates natural portions of corresponding material for comparison in the relationship between R and V, but as we have already seen, in the case of the *Cantigas* there there may be further recurrence of musical phrases between R/V and M. In addition, a piece may be more or less tightly bound together by the use of smaller motives within the virelai structure, whether confined to similarity of opening or cadence motives or as part of more motivic construction.

So how, in the sizeable body of musical material that the *Cantigas* represent, can we get a handle on variants at this scale? Fortunately the collection itself

presents us with a smaller and more controlled sample: the nine repeated pieces found in manuscript E. These pieces, which may have been re-used as the project behind E and the other *Cantigas* manuscripts began to run into difficulties, form a discrete body of “identical” material in which intrinsic variance can be studied without the complexities and potential influence of differing texts. As such, they represent a resource that has not yet been fully exploited by editors and scholars: the Anglés edition, for example, tends to treat each occurrence in E as if it was a separate piece (noting the repeat and any transposition, but giving occurrences from other sources only alongside the first instance in E and generally excluding the second instance from his comparison as if it was an exact reproduction of the earlier one). The identity of the overall melodies is not in doubt and can be followed clearly from phrase to phrase; and with the exception of #340-#412, none of the variants encountered significantly alter the structure of the pieces in which they occur. Three of the pieces also occur in manuscript T (#165-#395, #187-#394, and #192-#397) while the rest (#210-#416, #267-#373, #289-#396, #340-#412, #295-#388, and #349-#387) are found only in E.<sup>6</sup> While small divergences might be expected between versions from different manuscripts, the existence of variants between instances copied in the same manuscript is more interesting and potentially more fruitful in this case. The nine pieces are all *virelais* except for #340-#412 (which in its correct form is in a *cansó* style) and present us with a varied selection of shapes and structural features - these are noted, along with the intrinsic variants found, in Table 1. We also see changes that do not appear to have any impact on structure, such as transposition between versions (#165-#395 and #210-#416), or the writing of a piece with a flat in the clef as opposed to some accidentals in the melody (#289-#396).

The variants involved here are indeed small-scale - the use/removal of a plica between two versions of a phrase, a minor modification in a cadence figure - and their impact on larger-scale musical structure may seem slight, if any. Nonetheless, the comparison between the different manuscript versions of these repeated pieces throws up a number of interesting points.

Table 1. Correspondences between repeated pieces.

Piece nos.	MS(s)	Structural features	Phrase no(s).	Variants
#165-#395	E, T	<i>Virelai</i> , no major issues of structure	R1, R2	All three sources agree
			R3	(Corresponds to R1). Both E versions replace mid-phrase plica with equivalent figure in plain notes i.e. <i>c d_e f</i> for <i>c d_0 f</i>
			R4	E(395) replaces mid-phrase plica with plain-note equivalent; E(165) has extra decoration in cadence approach i.e. <i>d_0 d_c d</i> for <i>d_0 c d</i>
			M1-M4	All three sources agree
			V1	All three sources agree in following R3 version with plain note mid-phrase (NB: for first time in T)
			V2	Corresponds exactly to R2 in all three sources
			V3	T reverts to R1 version with mid-phrase plica; both E versions correspond to R3.
			V4	All sources correspond to their own respective version of R4 i.e. E(395) with mid-phrase plica and E(165) with its own cadence.



#187-#394	E, T	<i>Virelai</i> , one-phrase R section doubled to produce two-phrase V section	R1	All three sources agree
			M1-M2	(M2 corresponding to M1). All three sources agree
			V1	Corresponds exactly to R1 in all three sources
			V2	Corresponds largely to V1 (= R1), but both E(394) and T switch to more elaborate three-note cadence decoration i.e. <i>a_g_f</i> for <i>a_g</i> as in V1, E(187); T also changes the endnote of the stanza from <i>f</i> (as in both E versions) to <i>g</i> .
#192-#397	E, T	<i>Virelai</i> , change in text structure from R → V (long lines 11 10 11 10 to short lines 6+6 6+5 6+6 6+5) forces changes to melodic structure, although musically R's four-unit sections and V's eight-unit sections correspond overall	R1-R4	(R1 = R3, R2 = R4). All three sources agree
			M1-M4	All three sources agree
			V1-V2	(Melody needs to be extended by one syllable to accommodate text). All three sources agree on modifications: two syllables gained through change to R1 opening <i>f_0 d</i> to <i>f f_0 d</i> and breaking of the three-note melisma <i>e_d_e</i> to <i>e_d e</i> . Final pitch of R1 then held over to V3-V4.
			V3-V4	(Melody needs to be extended by one syllable to accommodate

				text). All three sources agree on modifications: initial pitch <i>c</i> carried over from R1, original starting note <i>c</i> becomes plica <i>d_0</i> , rest continues as R2
			V5-V8	Correspond exactly to V1-V4 in all three sources
#210-#416	E only	<i>Virelai</i> , R phrases re-used at M	R1	Both versions agree
			R2	E(416) replaces plain two-note figure in cadence approach with plica equivalent i.e. <i>c_0 e_0</i> for <i>c_d e_0</i>
			R3	Both versions agree
			M1	Corresponds exactly to R1 in both versions
			M2	Corresponds to R3, but both versions replace opening motif <i>a_g_a</i> with <i>a_0</i>
			M3-M4	Correspond exactly to M1- M2 in both versions
			V1	Corresponds exactly to R1 in both versions
			V2	Both versions agree on plica figure in cadence approach i.e. following E(416) rather than E(210)
			V3	Corresponds exactly to R3 in both versions
#267-#373	E only	<i>Virelai</i> , transition M → V	R1	(Open phrase of open/closed structure, cadencing on b). Versions differ on cadence ornament - E(373) has two-note figure <i>b_a b</i>

		producing new phrase at V1		while E(267) has more elaborate four-note <i>b_c_b_a b</i>
			R2	(Closed phrase for R1, cadencing on g). Each version carries its own cadence decoration through to R2
			M1-M2	Both versions agree, M2 corresponds exactly to M1
			V1	Both versions agree for transition phrase starting as M1/M2 but continuing with new material to arrive at same cadence point as R1
			V2	Corresponds exactly to R2 in both versions (each preserving its own cadence decoration)
#289-#396	E only	<i>Virelai</i> , no major issues of structure	R1	Both versions agree melodically (?possible rhythmic difference created by long at syllable four E[396] as against breve E[289]) - distinction maintained at V1)
			R2-R3	Both versions agree
			R4	E(396) replaces mid-phrase plica in R4 with equivalent in plain notes i.e. <i>c_d</i> for <i>c_0</i> .
			M1-M4	M1 and M2 agree in both versions, with M3-M4 corresponding exactly to M1-M2 and M4 in exact correspondence
			V1-V3	Correspond exactly to R1-R3 in both versions
			V4	Both versions follow E(396) version of R4 without mid-phrase plica.

#340-#412	E only	<i>Cansó</i> (nine-phrase stanza, no refrain). NB: Contrafact of Cadenet's <i>Si anc fui belha ni prezada</i>	S1-S6	(S2 corresponds exactly to S1). Both versions agree
			S7	(Corresponds to S4). E(412) adds extra plica to three-note cadence decoration found in E(340) and earlier S4 occurrence i.e. <i>e_d_e_0</i> for <i>e_d_e</i>
			S8-S9	Both versions agree
#295-#388	E only	<i>Virelai</i> , R phrases re-used at M	R1-R3	Both versions agree
			R4	E(388) replaces plain-note figure mid-phrase with plica equivalent i.e. <i>g_0 e</i> against <i>g_f e</i> E(295)
			M1	(Corresponds to R3). Both versions agree on altered opening at M1 i.e. <i>e f g</i> (matching R1) for <i>d e_f g</i>
			M2	(Corresponds to R4). Each version follows own R4 i.e. E(388) with mid-phrase plica, E(295) without
			M3-M4	Correspond exactly to M1-M2
			V1-V2	Correspond exactly to R1-R2
			V3	(Corresponds to R3). E(295) has mid-phrase plica for E(388)'s plain-note equivalent i.e. <i>g a_0</i> for <i>g a_g</i>

			V4	(Corresponds to V4). Both follow E(295)'s version i.e. without mid-phrase plica
#349-#387	E only	<i>Virelai</i> , no major issues of structure	R1	Both versions agree
			R2	E(387) replaces mid-phrase plica from E(349) with plain-note equivalent i.e. <i>a_g f</i> for <i>a_0 f</i>
			R3	Both versions agree
			R4	(Closed phrase for R2). Each version follows its own R2 i.e. E(349) with mid-phrase plica, E(387) without
			M1-M4	Both versions agree
			V1	Corresponds exactly to R1 in both versions
			V2	Each version follows its own V2 (corresponding exactly to R2)
			V3	Corresponds exactly to R3 in both versions
			V4	Each version uses its own V4 as closing phrase to V2 (following its respective R4)

1. While undeniably the same melodies and with no alterations in musical structure between the versions, there are small differences such as the substitution of *plicas* for plain-note figures (and vice versa) which indicate that reproduction of melodies within the collection cannot necessarily be expected to be exact with respect to the surface layer of musical structure.
2. That there are at least two layers of musical structure can be seen by the fact that there are some differences on which both or all of the versions are unanimous in their treatment e.g. the textually-induced remodelling of refrain material in #192-#397 or the modification of R3 when it is re-used to form the *mudanzas* in #295. The use of *plicas*, on the other hand, appears to be much more flexible, suggesting that these may often be discretionary in their use. As such, they perhaps should not be regarded as part of the essential structure of the piece, whether they occur within or between versions, unless there is good reason to do so.
3. The degree of correspondence between musical phrases as they occur and re-occur within the overall musical structure of the piece also seems to differ as far as these discretionary elements are concerned. In some cases (e.g. the differing cadence figures of #267-#373 or the use of *plica* and plain-note figures in the open-closed phrases of #349-#387) each version follows its own respective variant throughout. In others, however, the usage is much less consistent, or some elements may be used consistently while others are not e.g. the use of *plicas*/plain notes within and between all the versions from E and T for #165-#395 is not consistent, yet E(165) is consistent in its use of an additional cadence decoration at the end of R/V.

This matters precisely because musical form in the *Cantigas* depends on the small-scale. The musical structures are at once simple and complicated: simple because the overall patterns seem clear, complicated because attempts to pin those same patterns down can quickly run aground on the detail. When should a variant be considered structurally significant? How can we assess the “sameness” or “difference” of two phrases which share an underlying pattern but whose surface

structure, in terms of the individual pitches laid out in front of us, may look quite different? Just as a focus on large-scale structure - such as phrase-based analysis - can miss smaller details which nonetheless contribute to the shape of the piece, so those same small-scale variants can at times have a significant impact on our view of the larger structures. Even *virelai* form can turn on moments of small-scale structure, as in the cases where variants that might otherwise be considered trivial or decorative are used to draw a distinction between different versions of a phrase (e.g. to produce change at the *mudanza*, as in #295-#388) or to emphasise the return of familiar material. The issue in deciding these questions is whether there is evidence that a particular variant was *regarded* or *conceived* as part of the piece's essential structure: any variant can take on structural significance if it is used consistently in that way in the sources, while variation in the choice or placing of a figure might indicate that it is a discretionary element which may alter or disappear from version to version. This is not to say that the melodies can be neatly divided into two discrete layers - "basic" or "essential" structure and "surface" or "discretionary" structure; on the contrary, the evidence from the collection suggests that the different layers of structure overlap and interact to produce the particular form of a melody in a particular source or version. Variants can pass from one layer to another as the context in which they are used changes. As such, this touches on a number of important issues: the circumstances of the writing(-down) of the *Cantigas*, the scope for variation in copying and performance, and the need to interpret the evidence from the sources in assessing markers of structural intent. Once we acknowledge the different layers of structure, we are better placed to judge whether a variant is best regarded as being of structural significance, a sign of the latitude accorded to copyist or performer, or indeed a copying error. As Grier (1996, pp. 120-121) puts it:

The creators of the written sources ... appropriate to themselves the liberties envisaged to be the province of performers. It is up to the editor to judge, in specific cases, the degree to which this appropriation has occurred. In many cases, the written versions are only the tip of the iceberg in relation to the wealth of performing variants that surrounded these pieces. They do, however, reflect the type of variants the performing environment permitted or encouraged to be added to the repertory. Therefore each surviving version potentially possesses equal validity as a representation of the performing possibilities intrinsic to the tradition of the piece and as such is worthy of an independent edition. Each is its own "best text".

Moving beyond the nine repeated pieces into the collection as a whole, we find the same kinds of variations in small-scale structure throughout. While we may not have the security of comparison afforded by the melodies being identifiably the same over the whole length of a piece, the repetitions of the *virelai* form - together with other structures that involve repetition such as open/closed - often present us with multiple instances of something that is identifiable as the same basic phrase. We can therefore extend our comparison down to the level of individual phrases and their content. When we do, we find that as before, the degree of correspondence between different versions varies. Freed both from the constraints of an overly structural interpretation (i.e. one in which differences are by default assumed to be of structural significance) and one in which they either go unanalysed or are assumed to be the result of copying problems, we can assess these differences on an appropriate basis. Whether varying repeated instances of a phrase or adding a decorative figure, those behind the *Cantigas* melodies clearly took advantage of the freedom available at this discretionary level of structure. Among the variations we find are:

- plicas substituted for plain notes and vice versa, either singly or in figures;
- changes to decorative figures at cadences - basic cadence patterns tend to focus the melody on the home note by touching on the note above or the note below, but more elaborate figurations involving larger melismas are also possible;
- the addition, removal or substitution of larger melismas (three notes or more) occurring either mid-phrase or at cadences e.g. motifs such as *x\_y\_y\_0* (where *y* is a step lower than *x* and is followed by a downward plica) which occurs throughout the collection or the tripunctum - the treatment of these figures suggests that they were regarded as ornamental against a basic melodic movement involving a mixture of single notes and smaller groups of two or three pitches;
- changes to single pitches or short passages of pitches within a melodic contour - many of these are transitory (different ways of getting from one point to another), but may result in versions of a phrase that differ slightly in weighting depending on the tones stressed.



To illustrate the kind of information we can gain about the ways in which discretionary elements are used, let us take the case of plicas. McGee (1998, p. 50) describes this as “an ornamental sound that is added to a fixed pitch”, once related to liquescent neumes but now “decorative ending to a fixed pitch ... [that] could be applied to any breve or longa, including those without text”.<sup>7</sup> Comparison of the contexts in the *Cantigas* in which plicas either substitute or are substituted by plain notes bears this out. Found in both long and short versions depending on the rhythmic context, plicas can both replace real notes and add to real notes - any note of the melody belonging to a group of two notes or more which is the final note of the group may be rewritten as a plica, and any note or note group may be extended by adding a plica on the final pitch. Single notes can be transformed into two-note figures by means of the plica (e.g. #249 R1 cadence *b g g* becomes *b\_0 g g* at R3) or it can replace the second note in a two-note figure (e.g. #266 R1 cadence *e\_f g g* becomes *e\_0 g g* at R3). Where a two-note plica figure is substituted for a single pitch, it is usually added to it i.e. *b* → *b\_0* as in the example from #249 above; however, the original melody note is sometimes displaced to the second note of the plica (e.g. #148, where phrase M4 in E ends *a\_0 f g\_0 f* as opposed to *g f g\_0 f* in the corresponding phrase M2 and both versions in T). All these substitutions can also be found using entirely plain notes, though this is less common - something that lends support to the idea that the plica represented some special way of performing a note. Plicas seem to be found on all types of text sound in the *Cantigas*, confirming the suggestion that whatever their origins in relation to liquescence, by the time of the *Cantigas* they had become a discretionary ornamental feature which could be deployed at will.<sup>8</sup> They are very commonly found as passing notes filling in gaps of a third - but not exclusively so. Mid-phrase and between phrases they are also found with gaps of a fourth (up and down); #010 is alone in having a plica with a gap of a seventh between its refrain and *mudanzas*, but wider intervals are not uncommon at this section boundary where modal contrast may be evident - it merely indicates that the plica was not considered an impediment.<sup>9</sup> Plicas are also found when the next note moves by step, e.g. the upward plica *a\_0 g* mid-phrase in #148 M2 and M4 (all versions). In these cases, the plica acts as a “note to nowhere” i.e. an adornment on the phrase, and again we can find the same figures notated in plain notes elsewhere. The same is also true

for the very common “auxiliary note” melodic pattern (x x<sub>0</sub> x ..., upwards or downwards), in which plicas are often used.

The *Cantigas*, then, have the potential to furnish us with a considerable amount of information not only as to “the type of variants the performing environment permitted or encouraged to be added to the repertory” (in Grier’s words) but also as to the contexts in which they were deployed. Again the stability of the written evidence and the opportunities for comparison of melodic material allow us to refine our perspective on all the levels of structure present in the melodies. For example, it becomes easier to recognise open/closed structures when we know that the fixed part of these (i.e. the part that runs in parallel before diverging for the cadence) may contain discretionary elements that can disguise underlying similarity of contour.<sup>10</sup> Such insights also give us a truer picture of the compositional practices and the options available to those working within the repertory.

Let us now turn our attention to the texts.

### ***Textual structure in the Cantigas***

If musical structure in the *Cantigas* consists of different, interacting levels, text structure in the *Cantigas* is constructed more of interacting elements - predominantly line length and rhyme (including rhyme type) - as well as the grammar and syntax of medieval Galician-Portuguese, and narrative. All of these elements combine to shape both structure and content of each individual text.

In terms of large-scale structures, the closest counterpart to the *virelai* is the *zajal* - a refrain form commonly written as A A → b b b a → A A, or A B → c c c b → A B, in which the concluding rhyme of the stanza links back to that of the refrain. In his edition Mettmann (1986-1989, p. 40) claims that this appears in “más de 380 cantigas, sobre todo el del tipo AA/bbba (306 ejemplos)”, and while there may be some doubt over the exact criteria behind his numbers,<sup>11</sup> there is no doubt that this is the most frequent stanza pattern found (especially in the later parts of the

collection). However, as his other comment makes clear, this is only part of the story: “Los 420 poemas ofrecen más de 280 combinaciones métricas distintas, de las cuales unas 170 no aparecen más que una sola vez”.<sup>12</sup> The *zajal* is predominantly a rhyme-based form, and whatever its origins or subsequent development does not appear to bring any particular structure besides this with it (in terms of other determinants of text structure, such as line length or rhyme type) into the *Cantigas*. So like the *virelai*, it does not in itself prescribe what the structure of the text should be - beyond its refrain and characteristic rhyme pattern. Its strictures are also less onerous. As we shall see, producing a stanza rhyming b b b a (or a variant thereof) is a relatively broad task in the context of *Cantigas* versification: Clarke (1955, p. 98) describes it as “a fertile basic strophe”. It should also be noted while both *zajal* and *virelai* involve repetition and return as integral features of their structure - one with melody, one with rhyme - the proportion of “new” to “familiar” material differs. For a typical four-line stanza, the *virelai* returns to its refrain material halfway through, while the *zajal*’s refrain rhyme does not reappear until the final line of the stanza. There is thus a fundamental “mismatch” between the dominant textual template and the dominant musical one. Nevertheless, there is clearly a choice to adopt the *zajal* on the part of the collection’s creators/compilers - just as there is for the *virelai*. However, despite its prevalence, its looseness as a template means that it is less influential in terms of its impact on the structure and content of the individual texts. It remains as one of the wider, large-scale frames present, and its adoption may well reflect the line of Andalusian heritage feeding into the collection.<sup>13</sup>

As Mettmann’s numbers above show, the sheer variety of text shapes - *zajal* or otherwise - found within the *Cantigas* versification is impressive. We find single-unit line lengths ranging from two to sixteen syllables,<sup>14</sup> though a couple of the pieces which make use of caesuras achieve longer (e.g. 19 syllables for #015 with one caesura, 24 syllables for #369 with two). These are found in combination with two basic rhyme types: *agudo* rhymes ending on a stressed syllable and *grave* rhymes which end with a stressed followed by an unstressed syllable. Within a piece, a particular rhyme can either be variable - changing from stanza to stanza, i.e. b1 b1 b1 ... b2 b2 b2 ... and so on - or fixed, in which case they stay the same throughout

the piece (... a ...a and so on). Line length, rhyme type and the actual rhyme sounds together combine to form the text frame i.e. the shape or pattern created by their interaction in the first stanza and continued through subsequent stanzas. Once established, this text frame is administered strictly with regard to all three of its elements - not just in terms of the correct number of syllables or the appropriate end rhyme sound for the line, but also in maintaining the distinction between *agudo* and *grave* rhyme types, even in the unrhymed hemistichs of longer rhymed lines that make use of caesura. We can see the text frame at work in the refrain and opening two stanzas of #156 (shown in Table 2). This pattern is continued through all seven stanzas that make up the piece.

The expectation that the text frame will be maintained and that stanzas will match comes through to the collection from both the Occitan and Galician-Portuguese troubadour repertoires. Practitioners from the former visited Alfonso X's court<sup>15</sup> and the king himself was an active participant in the latter, as his compositions testify.<sup>16</sup> Variety of form, however, is more a characteristic of the Occitan troubadour output: in this respect the *Cantigas* depart from the more restricted formal environment of their nearest linguistic neighbours, the *cantigas d'amor*, *cantigas d'amigo* and *cantigas d'escarnho e maldizer*. In these repertoires the verse forms are shorter - perhaps only three or four stanzas; in the case of the *cantiga d'amor* using a basic ten-syllable line, and in the *cantigas d'amigo* making extensive use of parallelism within a shorter structure. By contrast, it appears that the minimum size for a *Cantiga de Santa Maria* is around six stanzas (anything less being regarded as abnormally short). Over half the pieces extend to ten or more stanzas, and around 30 pieces to over twenty. Only a handful of pieces run to thirty stanzas or more, the largest being the fifty-stanza #065, although it does stand out in terms of being considerably longer than the rest.<sup>17</sup> Form and its maintenance over the length of a piece is, however, a clear preoccupation of the treatises surviving from both Occitan and Galician-Portuguese troubadour repertoires. As Joifre de Foixà puts it in his *Regles de trobar*:

Table 2. Cantiga #156, text and text frame (refrain and stanzas 1-2).

Stanza no.	Position in stanza	Text	No. of syllables	End rhyme	Rhyme type
R0	1	A madre do que de terra	8	x	<i>grave</i>
R0	2	primeir' ome foi fazer	7	a	<i>agudo</i>
R0	3	ben pod' a lingua tallada	8	x	<i>grave</i>
R0	4	fazer que possa crecer.	7	a	<i>agudo</i>
S1	1	Dest' un mui maravilloso	8	b1	<i>grave</i>
S1	2	miragre vos contarey,	7	c1	<i>agudo</i>
S1	3	que fez, e mui piadoso,	8	b1	<i>grave</i>
S1	4	a Madre do alto Rei	7	c1	<i>agudo</i>
S1	5	por un crerigo que foran	8	x	<i>grave</i>
S1	6	a furt' ereges prender	7	a	<i>agudo</i>
S1	7	porque de Santa Maria	8	x	<i>grave</i>
S1	8	sempr' ya loor dizer.	7	a	<i>agudo</i>
R1	1	A madre do que de terra	8	x	<i>grave</i>
R1	2	primeir' ome foi fazer	7	a	<i>agudo</i>
R1	3	ben pod' a lingua tallada	8	x	<i>grave</i>
R1	4	fazer que possa crecer.	7	a	<i>agudo</i>
S2	1	Poilo ouveron fillado,	8	b2	<i>grave</i>
S2	2	quisérano y matar;	7	c2	<i>agudo</i>
S2	3	mais, polo fazer penado	8	b2	<i>grave</i>
S2	4	viver, foron-lle tallar	7	c2	<i>agudo</i>
S2	5	a lingua ben na garganta,	8	x	<i>grave</i>

S2	6	cuidando-o cofonder,	7	a	<i>agudo</i>
S2	7	porque nunca mais da Virgen,	8	x	<i>grave</i>
S2	8	fosse loor compõer.	7	a	<i>agudo</i>
R2		A madre do que de terra ...			

Maneyra es que d'aytantes rimes co faras la primera cobla faces les altres, e que les rimes de les cobles sien semblantz en llur loch e pars en sillabes, en axi que la primera rima de la primeyra cobla sia semblan a la primeyra rima de la segona cobla, e atressi a la primeyra de totes les altres cobles; e la segona rima de la primeyra cobla a la segona rima de les altres cobles. E en axi deus apparellar totes les altres rimes ... E aço es maneyra, que axi com començaras o perseguesques; pero tota hora deven esser les cobles d'un nombre e en rimes e en sillabes. (Marshall, 1972, p. 57)

The troubadour Gavaudan, meanwhile, provides a practical illustration of the difference between masculine and feminine rhyme types:

Lo vers dech far en tal rima  
Mascl' e femel que ben rim (de Riquer, 1992)

The only surviving Galician-Portuguese treatise, the *Arte de trovar* (d'Heur, 1975), exists in a 14th-century copy which is incomplete and can be fragmentary.

However, it too has a section on the *talho*, literally the “cut” i.e. form and shape of the line. While there are gaps and therefore some ambiguity in the information it offers, it is safe to say that it is referring to syllable count and the notion that lines should be “*igual*”. From its formulations we know that this term is not equivalent to either rhyme or syllable count on its own - it refers first to lines being “*rimadas e yguaes*” and later to them being “*yguaes e de tantas sillabas*”, in both cases citing the need for the words and melody to fit as the reason for making sure that lines match up correctly.<sup>18</sup>

Although the treatises which formalise these “rules” date from either late in or after the repertories they describe, the works themselves bear them out - not just in terms of the form of the texts created but also in their subject matter. Poetic competence in being able to stick to the chosen pattern is a topic for open

discussion among troubadours of both repertoires: as Chambers (1952-53) puts it with regard to the Occitan tradition, “perhaps as important as the content of their verse is the form in which this content is presented. On numerous occasions, troubadours express concern with the art and craftsmanship that goes into a poem”. However, form in these circumstances is no mere ornament: instead it becomes an active component, shaping the content of the piece as it unfolds. This is particularly so for the *Cantigas* because in the majority of pieces this content is narrative rather than lyric. In lyric pieces, whatever the formal constraints imposed by repertory-specific conventions or the limits of the chosen form, the poet has greater freedom in the choice of subject matter, overall direction of the piece and the manner of getting from one end to the other. This allows for more flexibility in the selection of individual words and phrases within the composition - the poet can choose to avoid elements that would be difficult to accommodate, or where these are included, they represent self-enforced restrictions undertaken in a deliberate show of verbal dexterity. Narrative, by contrast, carries the burden of telling the story: once the tale has been embarked on, it needs to be continued through to its conclusion, incorporating whatever characters, events or other elements are integral to it. The choice of story to tell, pacing and level of detail may be varied, but there will remain a certain core of narrative content that will need to be included. This creates a different sort of pressure from that found in pure lyric. The *Cantigas* are unusual in that they combine narratives - in the form of miracle stories - with the tight control of form found in lyric troubadour pieces. Other medieval Iberian narrative repertoires, such as epics or ballads, tend to use looser metrical structures and/or relax the demands of rhyme in favour of assonance (see for example the the miracle collection by Gonzalo de Berceo (written in *cuaderna vía*). Within the *Cantigas*, it is true that the *loores* tend to show a greater variety of metrical forms than the narrative *miragres*: I would argue that this demonstrates the point above i.e. that this variety is in part due to poets having more options when not encumbered with a narrative. There do not appear to be any substantial differences in the language used or poetic diction between the *miragres* and the *loores* that would otherwise mark the latter as constituting a separate group.<sup>19</sup> It is also true that metrical variety declines in the second half of the collection, and particularly beyond #300 where the *miragres* do tend to settle into forms very

similar to that of #156 above, using predominantly eight and seven-syllable lines in predictable combinations. This may well be a reflection of the collection's creators/compiler hurrying to finish the project against a background of diminishing support i.e. that they become less ambitious in the face of pressure to reach their target of 400 pieces and fall back increasingly on stereotyped forms.

Let us now go on to look in more detail at the effects of this text frame in operation. I have split the discussion that follows into the two component elements - line length and rhyme - depending on the focus of the examples, but it is important to remember throughout that neither exists in isolation from the other. Their effects are interlocking, and both influence the content of the text.

### *Line length*

To produce consistent lines of the right number of syllables is no easy task, particularly over the course of a long piece. It requires tight control over the syllable count, with words fitted carefully into the frame and enough dexterity to be able to adjust the length of phrases as required. We can see this control at work in the text of #160 - a *loor* rather than a *miragre*, so therefore not subject to the tensions involved in relaying a narrative - but one whose structure demonstrates considerable skill. It consists of eight two-line stanzas with end-refrain (rather than the usual head refrain) rhyming a a b, and uses a device known in the Galician-Portuguese repertory as *leixa-pren* in which the second line of each stanza recurs as the first line of the next. However, here the *leixa-pren* is combined with a shortening in line length from eight to seven syllables i.e. as each line moves down through the structure it needs to lose a syllable. While this type of recurrence itself is very unusual in the collection, it does provide a window onto some of the techniques for altering the contents of a phrase so as to produce the desired reduction. Often this is achieved by manipulation of very small elements within the line e.g. the addition/removal of monosyllables (grammar and syntax permitting), or switching from a longer form of the same word to a shorter one (if available). We can see the first of these options being exercised in the following examples:



pois que Madre de Deus foi ja (S2) → pois Madre ... (S3)

e del perdón nos gāará (S5) → e perdón... (S6)

e ao demo vencerá (S6) → e o demo ... (S7)

The second can be seen in the switch from the three-syllable “porende” of S4 to the two-syllable “poren” of S5. The line that moves from the third to the fourth stanza, meanwhile, loses a syllable by squeezing the vowels of “seerá” into one syllable to give “será”. This change is fully notated in manuscript *T* which makes the graphical distinction between the two forms, but not in *E* which gives “seerá” both times. This may at first look like a copying error, the scribes of *E* having failed to make the necessary adjustment. However, evidence from elsewhere in the collection suggests that *seer* belongs to a group of words - including *tīinna*, *veer*, *ūu*, *cobiĩoso*, *omees*, *mercee* and related forms - in which a similar squeezing is found but not always explicitly indicated in the manuscripts. The norm in the *Cantigas* is for vowels which do not form part of a single sound, such as that found in words like *causa*, *coisa* or *Deus*, to each contribute separately to the syllable count for that particular word (as in *gā-a-rá* and *a-o* in the examples above). But both examination of variants between manuscripts (e.g. *seerá* vs. *será* as in #160 above), and the metrical contexts in which these forms occur, indicates that they belong to a limited group - those with the “extra weak vowel” described by Vandrey (1980) - which can have two possible syllable counts depending on whether both vowels contribute or are squeezed into one. The frequency of lines containing them which are “irregular by one syllable” is such that it points to one of two explanations: either the creators of the texts and/or scribes found these forms especially difficult to handle, or this was a phenomenon which it was not felt necessary always to notate in the written text. This might appear to go against the notion of strict control of syllable count, but if the second explanation is correct (and the practice of the manuscripts suggests it is) it would provide another means of adjusting the syllable count for the line as in #160, where the metrical context clearly demands it. There are irregularities in the metrics of the *Cantigas* - whether due to errors of transmission or mistakes in the original composition - but it is important to separate out those for which we appear to have enough consistent evidence to suggest a different explanation.

Returning to #160, in the move from S4 to S5 a simple reduction in the syllable count is not possible within the grammar and syntax of the phrase. It therefore becomes necessary to tweak the contents to achieve the desired length:

u sempre por nos rogará (S4) → u por nos lle rogará (S5) [i.e. *a Deus*]

Sometimes, however, it is just not possible to change the length of the line without more major alterations. #160 presents us with an example of this in its opening stanza, which contains a prominent enjambement between the two lines of the first stanza (“Quen bõa dona querrá / loar, lo’a que par non á ...”). As the second line is not an independent unit, this limits the poet’s room for manoeuvre, resulting in a paraphrase of the original line at the start of S2: “E par nunca ll’achará ...”.

With its repetitions of lines creating the opportunity for comparison, #160 shows us some of the ways in which it is possible to manipulate the syllable count of a particular portion of text. Most of the *Cantigas* texts do not have devices or metrical structures which impose such strict constraints, but it is nevertheless possible to imagine that there are similar processes underlying their composition. Having chosen (or begun in) a particular text pattern for the piece, the poet then has to convey the rest of the content within that frame, so will need to find ways of expressing that content that fit within the available space. The skill of the poet will be demonstrated precisely by his/her ability to maintain control of the shape of his/her text as it proceeds, and the solutions he/she find to achieve this. If he/she succeeds, the finished text will be a model of metrical precision; if not, it may well end up in the category of pieces whose manuscript variants seem to respond to difficulties in their metrical structure. Parkinson (1987) makes clear that those responsible for the production of the manuscripts were not passive copyists with regard to metrical structure, intervening on both a large and small-scale. Often when we find signs of emendation it is in response to irregularities or ambiguities in the structure of the text - the copyist(s) trying to make sense of something that appears not to fit or where there are treatments that are unorthodox from a grammatical point of view. They were clearly active readers, and as Bertolucci (2000) notes, their reactions can help us recognise and engage with the compositional practices behind the text.

It is sometimes hard from a modern, English-speaking standpoint to imagine ourselves in the position of the poets working in the medieval poetic *koiné* of Galician-Portuguese and within these structural frameworks. Without knowledge of the linguistic resources or the practice in generating lines of different sizes, it can be hard to assess the difficulty of the task and thus to properly appreciate the achievement. We can all admire a formally elaborate *loor* like #160, but what challenges are involved, say, in a narrative *miragre* like #156 above (in one of the commonest metrical patterns)? We can see some signs in the use of persistent formulations such as those of the form “per com[o] ...”, which recur in a variety of line lengths. A selection of these using the verb *aprender* is shown below:

e, per com' aprendi eu (#353, S6)  
 per como eu apres' ey (#356, S6)  
 chamou, per com' aprendi (#242, S4)  
 ca, per com' eu apres' ey (#007, S1)  
 per com' end' eu apres ey (#104, S8)  
 era, per com' apres' ey (#234, S3)  
 per com' eu pud' aprender (#295, S1)  
 per com' eu aprix e sei (#249, S1)

All of these are of the same line format - seven-syllable *agudo* and constituting an end-of line rhyme - but we can see from the omission and rearrangement of the different components that considerable flexibility is available to bring the line in at the right size and on the right rhyme. The phrase “per com' aprendi”, or one of its variants, can be used to round out a line when a rhyme in -l is required, and can be fitted onto a front end of different length to produce a longer line e.g. “que fez a Virgen, per com' aprendi” (#118, S1). It can also be found in the middle of phrases, acting as a “filler” e.g. “que, per com' eu aprendi, era de mui bon semellar” (#285, S1). Similar constructions involving verbs like *dizer*, *oir* or *contar* are also common e.g. “per com' eu oý contar” (#318, S4). Formulations of this type are part of a “truthfulness” *topos* useful in the context of narrating a miracle and as such provide a convenient, established solution for composers of *miragres*. They are often found in the early stanzas of a piece, but not exclusively so - occurrences in

later stanzas show that these were a resource that could be turned to at any point in a piece, provided the rhyme context was suitable.

The aim in studying “clichés” of this type is gain some appreciation of the task facing the poet in relating his/her narrative within the confines of the overall text frame. Chisman (1976) also considered this question, concluding that pressures emanating from the structural demands of the pieces can produce distortions of syntax in the text such as displacement of clauses from the positions they would be expected to occupy in medieval Galician-Portuguese prose. This is useful in shedding light on the differences between versified and non-versified text; however, we still need ways to get closer to the poetic diction of the texts. One possibility is to look more closely at the grammar and syntax of a text that has a particular restriction on space e.g. short lines within its structure. Examination of the distribution of line lengths in the *Cantigas* suggests that anything under six syllables should be regarded as short: anything of four or under would be very short.

#300 is a piece that contains a mixture of line lengths, with eight-, seven-, six- and four-syllable lines as part of its structure (see Table 3). Again this is a *loor* rather than a *miragre*, but it affords us an opportunity to see how the shorter four-syllable lines are handled in the text. These occur mid-stanza, in among the longer eight- and seven-syllable lines, so to that extent form an obstruction in what would otherwise be a more straightforward stanza model. Their rhymes match those of the first and fourth eight-syllable lines of each stanza, which are (unusually) arranged in a chiastic pattern with the second and third.

There are six stanzas in total, so this requires a total of 24 four-syllable lines. When we compare these across the piece, we see that 11 of them start - as do the majority of those in S1 - with the conjunction *e*. This is unsurprising, as extending or continuing something that has gone before presents perhaps the simplest solution to producing the short lines. Space is limited, for grammar as well as content. The examples from the first stanza largely continue the list of attributes of the Virgin by means of the conjunction plus a three-syllable adjective: with the

Table 3. Cantiga #300, text syllable count and rhyme type (refrain and first stanza).

Stanza no.	Position in text	Text	No. of syllables	Rhyme type
R0	1	Muito deveria	6	<i>grave</i>
R0	2	ome sempr' a loar	6	<i>agudo</i>
R0	3	a Santa Maria	6	<i>grave</i>
R0	4	e seu ben rezôar.	6	<i>agudo</i>
S1	1	Ca ben deve razôada	8	<i>grave</i>
S1	2	seer a que Deus por Madre	8	<i>grave</i>
S1	3	quis, e seend' el seu Padre	8	<i>grave</i>
S1	4	e ela filla e criada,	9*	<i>grave</i>
S1	5	e onrrada	4	<i>grave</i>
S1	6	e amada	4	<i>grave</i>
S1	7	a fez tanto, que sen par	7	<i>agudo</i>
S1	8	é preçada	4	<i>grave</i>
S1	9	e loada	4	<i>grave</i>
S1	10	e será quant' el durar.	7	<i>agudo</i>

\* overlength - from subsequent stanzas, should be eight syllables

latter in place, there is little room left for further information or expression. This division of “1+3” is carried through all but four of the remaining short lines: 11 having the conjunction *e* and a further seven making use of the monosyllabic prepositions *ca* (2), *que* (2), *mas*, *mais* and *u*. A further two have other monosyllables: the verb form *é* in the “*é preçada*” of S1 above and the “*a loando*” of S4 (where *a* is the pronoun standing for the Virgin). In the remaining four examples, the entire line is taken up by a single four-syllable word: *nemigalla* (S3), *corações* (S5), *lealdade* (S6) and *falssidade* (also S6). Three of these are found at

position nine in the stanza, and the other (*lealdade*) at position six i.e. after at least one other short line, perhaps suggesting that their positioning requires a certain amount of grammatical preparation in the preceding text.

#300 is also interesting in that it offers an example of “Mussafia-type” treatment of the syllable count. In 1896 Adolfo Mussafia (1983) pointed out some examples of Galician-Portuguese verse where equivalence of verse length seemed to be based on the gross number of syllables in each line rather than on the placing of the last accented syllable at the end of the line, drawing most of his examples from the *Cantigas*. From this practical observation, he suggested that a line with  $n$  syllables and a *grave* ending (i.e. with the last accented syllable at  $n-1$ ) could correspond in length to a line with  $n$  syllables and an *agudo* ending (last accented syllable at  $n$ ), an idea that became known as “Mussafia’s law”. It occurs in the *Cantigas* not so much as a correspondence between *grave* and *agudo* rhyme types at the same positions in the stanza (there is only one example of this in the collection, #021, which alternates the two types of lines in the variable portion of its stanza - something that should be regarded instead as a device) but more as another source of variety in text patterns. There are around 20 pieces that combine *agudo* and *grave* lines within the same text frame, as shown in #006 above. Note that despite the presence of this “Mussafia-type” matching within the frame, the correspondence of the different types from stanza to stanza is observed as normal i.e. *agudo* to *agudo*, *grave* to *grave*. This suggests that Clarke was right when she concluded: “it is to be doubted that Alfonso differed from Berceo and other Castilian poets in the counting of his syllables. Any combination of different line lengths should probably be considered a phase of Alfonso’s fondness for polymetric patterns” (1955, p. 88). The difference in where the final stressed syllable falls does create a slightly different rhythm in the text as it moves from one type of Mussafia line to the other, so this may have been an effect that was deliberately chosen, albeit in a relatively small number of pieces.

One final way in which we can try and get closer to the demands of composing a narrative *cantiga* is to look at how elements of the story have been incorporated structurally into the text. I have made reference above to the need to “fit things

in”, but what sort of things need to be accommodated and how? It is difficult to test this with the story as a whole, since the poet is in theory at liberty to stretch it out over as many or as few stanzas as he/she wishes,<sup>20</sup> and go into as much or as little detail along the way. Provided that his/her narrative has a beginning, middle and an end and relates the salient facts of the miracle, it will be hard to assess the difficulty of his/her task except on those cases where something has gone wrong and we are left with a story that either has gaps or makes no sense. However we may have more success in considering elements of the story - characters, objects and so on - which are fundamental to it yet present a challenge to the composer of the text. #048 tells of how the monastery of Montserrat runs short of water because this has to be purchased from the neighbouring landowner. The nearest spring is on his land, and he takes full advantage in holding the monks effectively to ransom. They pray to the Virgin, and she causes the spring to move from his land to theirs. The nobleman is so struck by the miracle that has occurred that he donates the land on which the spring formerly stood to the convent.

This is not a complicated story, nor is the text frame chosen for the piece particularly elaborate - the whole piece proceeds in eight-syllable *grave* lines. However the narrative contains a number of basic elements which require four syllables in terms of their syllable count, most notably the *cavaleiro* and *mõesteiro* who are the main protagonists (the latter also appearing in three syllables as the *convento*). Other key elements include the *fonte* that is the cause of the dispute. Given that the text frame requires the text to be arranged in regular hemistichs, these elements will need to be accommodated within the confines of the eight-syllable segments. As the four-syllable words will take up half a segment wherever they occur, we can look to see how they have been fitted into the structure. When we examine the distribution of these elements through the text, we see that *cavaleiro* occurs exclusively in unrhymed hemistichs while *mõesteiro* is only found once in a rhyming hemistich as opposed to twice in the unrhymed ones. The shorter *convento* is also found only in unrhymed hemistichs (twice) whereas the element *fonte* occurs five times in total - one in an unrhymed hemistich, and four times in rhymed hemistichs (in S2 as the first rhyme). This makes sense when we look at the fixed rhymes involved at the end of each stanza, which consist largely of four-

syllable adjectives in -OSOS describing the monks (i.e. *piadosos*, *menguadosos* etc.). If the rhyme occupies fully half of the hemistich, then there will be no room to accommodate larger words along with it, displacing these into the unrhymed hemistichs. The rhyme words for the other variable rhymes that make up the piece are slightly more variable in size, but it is noticeable that the remaining four-syllable words in the piece occur either in the unrhymed hemistichs (*Groriosa*, *adeante*, *saborosa* etc.) or as rhymes (*Catalonna*, *abadia*, *pennorava* etc.). Even with a relatively spacious text frame, i.e. without the “choke points” of short lines, there is still a need to place these longer words carefully to achieve a workable text structure and leave room for the grammar that is also needed to convey events. #048 is a convenient example as its story depends on longer elements, helping make the diction of the text more visible. But it makes clear the linked nature of form and content in the *Cantigas*: in this case content may have influenced text structure, but as we shall see in the case of rhyme, this link runs both ways.

### *Rhyme*

Like syllable count, rhyme in the *Cantigas* is strictly administered: Clarke (1955, p. 96) describes it as “pure consonance”. Rhymes have to be complete i.e. for an *agudo* line the last syllables must match while for a *grave* line the last two syllables must match (the last stressed syllable and the one following). And as in the case of line length, once the rhyme scheme is fixed by the first stanza it must be correctly carried through the remainder of the piece. This means that the poet needs to find enough rhymes for each rhyme sound to cover the corresponding position(s) in all the stanzas of the piece, according to the chosen rhyme scheme. An examination of the rhyming practices across the collection reveals yet another constraint: he/she must normally do so without returning to a particular rhyme sound (in the case of variable rhymes)<sup>21</sup> and a particular word (in the case of fixed rhymes) - not such an easy task in longer pieces. The *Cantigas* creators do not always succeed in avoiding repetitions, yet instances of this are rare enough in the context of the collection as a whole to make clear that this was one of the goals. Add this together with the



previous challenge of creating a text of the required shape, and the intricacies of the task are evident.

Let us look first at an example of a fixed rhyme structure. #011 has quite an elaborate text structure involving shorter rhymed lines - a mixture of eight-syllable *grave* lines alternating with five-syllable *agudo* and *grave* lines. It uses only three rhymes to cover this, over the course of its ten stanzas: -IA, -ER and -ADO (see Table 4).

The maintenance of the rhymes over the course of the structure is impressive, but the poet has been strategic in his/her choice. The rhymes here are all ones for which there are a large number of possibilities available. The -IA ending opens up the imperfect tense, the -ER ending offers up a whole family of verbal infinitives and the -ADO ending provides both adjectives and past participles. Parkinson (2000b, p. 136) notes the distinction between “easy” rhymes i.e. “ones with many words or regular grammatical endings” and “difficult” rhymes “with few words available to implement them”. By choosing easier rhymes - particularly those which might also be easier to accommodate from a grammatical point of view, like verbs - the task of finding enough to complete even a long rhyme scheme becomes much more straightforward. Thus getting the 74 rhymes needed for the monorhyme #420 (six twelve-line stanzas plus a two-line *tornada*) is simplified considerably by the choice of -ADA, again as a past participle/adjective, for a text describing the Virgin, her attributes and the events of her life.

Even with an advantageous choice of rhyme, the fact that fixed rhyme pieces do not appear to extend beyond twelve stanzas suggests that there were limits to how long a structure of this type could be maintained. Pieces composed entirely of fixed rhymes are also relatively rare, numbering only around twenty in total. Far more common are mixtures of fixed and variable rhymes, such as those that characterise *zajal*-type stanzas. The *zajal* structure links the rhyme of the refrain to that of the end of the stanza, so the poet will still need to find enough fixed rhymes to cover the corresponding position(s) in each stanza, but it is the variable rhymes - in

Table 4. #011 text and rhyme scheme (refrain and first stanza).

Stanza no.	Position in stanza	Text	End rhyme
R0	1	Macar ome per folia	a
R0	2	aginna caer	b
R0	3	pod' en pecado,	c
R0	4	do ben de Santa Maria	a
R0	5	non dev' a seer	b
R0	6	desasperado.	c
S1	1	Poren direi todavia	a
S1	2	com' en hũa abadia	a
S1	3	un tesoureiro avia,	a
S1	4	monge que trager	b
S1	5	con mal recado	c
S1	6	a ssa fazenda sabia	a
S1	7	por a Deus perder,	b
S1	8	o malfadado	c

whatever disposition - that make up the bulk of the piece. This immediately makes the task simpler, as rhymes are required in much smaller groups, such as the three at a time that are needed for the typical *zajal* stanza. Shorter pieces (e.g. those of six to eight stanzas) therefore become much easier, as do middle-length pieces (up to fifteen stanzas). However the stricture of not re-using the same rhyme sound means that longer pieces still present a challenge. Parkinson (2000b, p. 133) points out that this is especially so for pieces that use *agudo* rhymes, with only 40 different *agudo* rhyme sounds found in the collection compared with 250 *grave*

rhymes. As he notes, the choices for them are thus “considerably more constrained” as far as variety of rhyme sound is concerned (p. 133). Furthermore, a distinction between open and closed “e” is maintained in rhyme sounds i.e. their treatment through the collection makes clear that combinations involving them were considered as two different sounds. We can see this in #135, whose opening stanza rhymes *dizer* → *retraer* → *aver* → *entender* → *fazer* with closed “e” while its sixteenth stanza uses the open “e” sequence *quer* → *moller* → *Monpesler* → *disser*- [ron-lle] → *mester*. The clear separation of open and closed “e” rhyme sounds in the texts keeps certain words separate: most notably, as Parkinson (2000b) and others observe, *sandeu* (which goes with the preterite tense ending -*eu*) and *judeu* (which goes with the group containing possessives, and in the plural, *Deus*).

Where “difficult” rhymes are involved, this tends to produce small groups of “rhyming clichés” i.e. combinations that are frequently found together (Chisman, 1976). Unsurprisingly pairings such as *maravilloso/piadoso* (as in #156 above) or *groriosa/fremosa/piadosa* are common. However, the most blatant example of this is the -UZ rhyme, one of the ones with very few options for rhyming. *Luz* and *cruz* are words which (as might be expected in the context of a Marian miracle collection) occur in most examples: these are joined by the verb forms *aduz* (from *aduzer* “to bring, lead to, or induce”) and *nuz* (from *nuzir* “to hurt, damage”). To go beyond these requires more ingenuity: thus Parkinson (2000b) notes two mentions of *estruz* “ostrich”, both in contexts where the more easily incorporated -uz words have already been used up. #135’s example is particularly clever, as a couple who were separated by their families but have now been reunited by the Virgin finally make their escape towards the end of the poem on a “cavalo de Çuz”, which we learn “corre mais que estruz”. The drawing in of the place-name “Çuz” provides both one of the remaining rhymes needed and an excuse to introduce the other, and as such represents a doubly ingenious solution. It also offers another illustration of the influence of form - in this case the demands of rhyme - over content in the *Cantigas*. We need to remember that the choice of details presented to us often depends on what will fit in the highly structured environment of the text. This may sometimes mean that details which might otherwise be included

have to be omitted – say, information found in other renderings of that particular miracle story outside the *Cantigas* – but it can also result in information being pulled into the text for reasons of rhyme (like the provenance of the horse on which the couple make their escape). The weight we might give to such information in subsequent scholarship therefore needs to be considered carefully. Having chosen *ponna/vergonna* for its refrain rhymes, it comes as no surprise that the story of the pregnant abbess related in #007 also throws up a man from *Bolonna*, a bishop from *Colonna*, a child raised in *Sansonna*, and in the final stanza, the fact that the nuns in question belong to the order of *Onna*. Such details would at least need to be plausible in the context in which they were being deployed, in order to be acceptable rhyme solutions, and obvious cases such as these should prompt questions as to why this information has been included: is the primary motivation formal rather than content-driven? However a similar interweaving of form and content will be occurring throughout the collection on more subtle levels. Where the context is more plausible or likely (e.g. *groriosa/fremosa* applied to the Virgin) such form-related usage will be less obvious than in contexts where it is not, or where the frequency of a particular combination of rhymes alerts us to the presence of a rhyming cliché. But just like the need to achieve the desired syllable count, the requirement to come up with an appropriate and functional rhyming pattern will be exerting a constant pressure on the text. It is a tribute to inventiveness of the *Cantigas* poets that there are relatively few anomalous solutions such as coinages or distortion of words (e.g. the possessive *mia* as a two-syllable rhyme in #100, while it appears consistently as a monosyllable elsewhere) – as a result, these unorthodox rhyme solutions tend to stand out whenever they occur.

This is formal poetry, and no feature better illustrates the interdependent nature of rhyme and syllable count than that of enjambement. This is frequent in the *Cantigas* as the narratives are poured into the text frame: Chisman (1976, p. 399) claims “nearly 20% of all lines are run-on”. While it is in part an inevitable result of the structuring of the text into lines of a particular size, it is found throughout the collection – not just in pieces that have short lines – and extends not only to the carry-over of sense but also to the splitting of words between lines and

even occasionally between stanzas.<sup>22</sup> However, the prevalence of enjambement often has a clear basis in the rhyme requirements of the piece, serving to place a particular word at the end of the line. Chisman (1976, p. 396-398) notes distortions from the normal Galician-Portuguese prose word order for the grammatical figure “possessive adjective plus noun” when this appears at the end of a line i.e. in order to provide a rhyme, whereas occurrences mid-phrase (i.e. away from the pressure of rhyme) tend to respect the normal order. She also observes disrupted syntax as parenthetical clauses are dropped into the flow of the narration to satisfy rhyme, citing examples such as “foi por hũa, com’ aprendi, → dona que soya morar” from #146 (Chisman, 1976, p. 399). What both these types of usage show is that enjambement is not purely a consequence of the division into lines in shaping a versified text, but instead reflects both aspects that go to make up the text frame.

Many of the cases of word-splitting enjambement involve adverbs and are clearly rhyme-driven: the content part of the adverb forms the rhyme, while the suffix *-mente* is postponed to the next (stanza) line. This produces some of the most striking examples, such as that found in #072. A man is playing dice in a tavern: by stanza three he has lost money, which causes him to lose faith and blaspheme violently. The text contains quite a complex mixture of short lines and longer ones, but the rhyme for the four refrain lines is -AL while the stanza is of the *zajal* pattern, consisting of three lines (all with the same variable rhyme) followed by a shorter five-syllable line in -AL linking back to the refrain. At stanza three, this last rhyme is provided by the content part of the adverb *descomunamente* with the *-mente* part held over to stanza four, separated by the repeat of the refrain (here given in italics):

Que ena taberna beveu  
e aos dados perdeu  
algu', e poren descreeu  
mui descomunal-

*Quen diz mal  
da Reynna Espiritual,  
log' é tal  
que mereç' o fog' ynfernal.*

Mente; ca a Deus dēostou ...

That this phenomenon occurs predominantly in a defined context - adverbs - indicates that it was a solution to the challenge posed by the text framework, but one which was only expected to be applied with regard to particular grammatical forms and perhaps only as a second-order solution i.e. when no other, more conventional possibilities could be found. To return briefly to the enjambement noted previously in #135 - *disser-ron-lle* - which does not belong to this category, there is evidence from the manuscripts that this was considered a more serious (and therefore less acceptable) word-break. The lines containing this enjambement have been erased from manuscript *E*, suggesting that a subsequent editor/copyist felt it could be improved on.<sup>23</sup>

### *Return to the text frame - meestria in the Cantigas*

As a final example, and by way of drawing together the different aspects of textual structure in the *Cantigas*, let us consider an excerpt from #056 (see Table 5). This tells the story of a monk, who in spite of a lack of learning decides to honour the Virgin by singing five psalms marking the five letters of her name, which he does on a daily basis for the rest of his life. When the monk dies, five roses grow in his mouth.

Stanza four in this piece offers us an instance of all these aspects coming together - line length and rhyme, along with narrative elements - to shape the text. Here the narrator lists the titles of the five psalms that the monk has chosen: the lines each have seven syllables with the exception of the final line of the stanza which has eight (matching the refrain), and the chosen rhyme scheme involves fixed rhymes in -ER alternating with the variable rhyme c4, which here is -Á. These have been skilfully incorporated into the frame of the text: the four-syllable “Magnificat” and “Ad Dominum” have been placed towards the beginning of their respective lines, while word-break enjambement has been used for “In convertendo” and “Retribue servo tuo” so that these contribute two of the variable rhymes necessary for the stanza. The poet would have needed to find some kind of special solution for the latter anyway - at eight syllables, it is too big to fit into the text frame as is (and

Table 5. #056 text and text frame, refrain and stanza.

Stanza no.	Position in stanza	Text	No. of syllables	End rhyme	Rhyme type
R3	1	Gran dereit' é de seer	7	a	<i>agudo</i>
R3	2	seu miragre mui fremoso	8	b	<i>grave</i>
R3	3	da Virgen, de que nacer	7	a	<i>agudo</i>
R3	4	quis por nos Deus grorioso.	8	b	<i>grave</i>
S4	1	Quen catar e revolver	7	a	<i>agudo</i>
S4	2	estes salmos, achará	7	c4	<i>agudo</i>
S4	3	"Magnificat" y jazer,	7	a	<i>agudo</i>
S4	4	e "Ad Dominum" y á,	7	c4	<i>agudo</i>
S4	5	e cabo del "In conver-	7	a	<i>agudo</i>
S4	6	tendo" e "Ad te" está,	7	c4	<i>agudo</i>
S4	7	e pois "Retribue ser-	7	a	<i>agudo</i>
S4	8	vo tuo" muit' omildoso.	8	b	<i>grave</i>
R4		Gran dereit' é de seer...			

the wrong rhyme to go into the only eight-syllable slot available in the stanza). The pressures of rhyme and line length between them may well be responsible for disrupting the order of the letters spelt out by the titles, from MARIA to MAIAR.

Being able to accommodate “difficult” elements such as the psalm titles is a test of the poet’s skill, and a *tour-de force* stanza such as the one above that would surely have been appreciated by the intended audience. Parkinson (1999, p. 22) notes a reference in the *Arte de trovar* to the term “*meestria*”, which he observes is used “with a qualitative sense, to indicate skill or artifice”. The normal demands

of text structure in the *Cantigas* already provide plenty of opportunities for their creators to show *meestria* in a general sense, whether through difficult rhyme schemes or elaborate combinations of line lengths. But as well as choosing harder patterns, they could also prove themselves through the use of poetic devices - thus placing additional burdens/restrictions on the compositional options available to them. Among the devices we find are *coblas doblas* (stanzas rhymed in pairs, though the same principle could be applied to only some of the rhymes in the stanza - contrast #024 and #153); *coblas alternadas*, or stanzas which alternate in pattern, though this is rare (#21 applies this to line length, using Mussafia matching to switch between 11-syllable *agudo* and *grave* lines for odd- and even-numbered stanzas); more usually, alternating patterns of this type are found with the device dubbed by Ferrari (1983) as *parola rima* or refrain word (returning to the same actual rhyme word, usually at the end of a *zajal* stanza and in some cases returning to the rhymes of the refrain - e.g. #118). The poet can also include elements of parallelism such as fixed lines (see #320), though again examples of this are rare. (We have already noted the presence of several examples of *rondeau* form in the collection, with its characteristic repeat of the initial refrain line mid-stanza). While perhaps less of a device and more of a stylistic touch, we do also find poets linking back to the refrain by quoting from it, usually in the early stanzas of the text. Although the preference in the collection is overwhelmingly for an initial refrain, there are a few examples of pieces with end refrain (such as #160 quoted above) and a few which have a variable refrain (e.g. the alternating “Maldito seja ...”/ “Bẽeito seja ...” of #290, or #002 which switches from its initial “Muito devemos ...” to “Poren devemos ...” for the refrains which follow), as well as a small number of refrainless *loores* (mostly concentrated in the *Festas* pieces). There are also four pieces which have a *tornada* (a “mini-stanza” consisting of a couple of lines at the end of the text, which picks up the rhyme(s) of the closing part of the stanza and stands as a tailpiece to what has gone before). In varying measure, all of these devices allow the poet to “up the challenge” he/she has set him/herself and display even greater *meestria*.



## Notes

1. See Parkinson (1987, pp. 36-39), which argues convincingly that a “misunderstanding between copyists” led to refrains being mistakenly inserted into the #340 version - the expectation that it would follow the normal refrain pattern influencing the scribes’ response to a “non-standard” structure.
2. When discussing the melodies, this thesis will use letters to indicate individual musical pitches with underscores to link pitches grouped together in the manuscripts e.g. *e\_f g* (the *Cantigas* melodies tend to stay in or around the compass of an octave, making this feasible). Italics will be used for musical pitches to avoid confusion with letters used in the discussion of musical structures or rhyme schemes; pitches indicated by plicas in the manuscripts will be notated as 0’s e.g. *e\_0 g* (the handling of plicas will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter).
3. Although Machaut’s work dates from a later period and much of it is polyphonic, his *virelais* are predominantly monophonic (25 of the 33 that survive with music) and thus comparisons with the *virelai* of the *Cantigas* are less remote than might otherwise be expected.
4. The question of nomenclature needs to be kept separate from the question of origins. In using the term *virelai*, I do not seek to assert French origins for the form as found in the collection - it is merely that this is a convenient reference point at which the form has become stable and recognizable. Mary O’Neill (2000) prefers the Provençal term *dansa* which is used in some of the surviving thirteenth-century treatises that look back on the troubadour tradition, although these focus more on genre and content rather than the form itself.
5. This is of course not to preclude the possibility that there may have been other unwritten elements either understood or available within the musical community of the *Cantigas* (composers, scribes, performers) e.g. those added in the course of a performance.
6. There is one other instance of a repeated melody (but not with the same text): the contrafact #213-#377. Its two versions of the melody do show many of the small variations found in the repeated pieces, but to avoid complications stemming from the different texts I am not including it here.
7. On the basis of the evidence from the *Cantigas*, I would not necessarily want to endorse some of McGee’s wider conclusions on plicas and ornamentation in medieval music, but his basic description holds.
8. As such, the evidence does not support David Wulstan’s attempt (1993, p. 18) to use the presence of plicas in melodies (particularly in those found on syllables ending in “r” in #010) as support for the existence of paragogic syllables not explicitly given in the text - they are too common throughout the collection and occur with a whole range of sounds.
9. Martin Cunningham is therefore wrong, in his 2000 edition of the *loores*, to argue for the transposition of the refrain and vuelta of #010 based on the presence of a plica at the end of the closing phrase - a passing note is not the plica’s only function.
10. The demand for strict identity in the fixed part may be why some open/closed structures are not given by Anglés in his edition e.g. see #168, where he classes the two

refrain phrases R1 and R2 as different phrases despite the similarity of melodic contour between them.

11. Mettmann here equates *zajal* and *virelai*, which as we see is not necessarily the case.
12. Again the exact numbers may be questioned, as it is difficult to keep track of unique/variant structures across the collection.
13. See Ferreira (2000, 2004) and especially Menocal (1987). The latter makes the important distinction between “classical Arabic” and “Andalusian”, and argues strongly for the need to recuperate the influence of al-Andalus in the intercultural context of medieval Europe even if surviving literary texts are sparse (pp. 58-61).
14. Rather than following either the French or Spanish practices of syllable counting (i.e. to count to the last accented syllable of the phrase and then either disregard or add one respectively to the count for any unaccented syllable beyond that), all syllable counts here will be based on the gross number of syllables in the given text segment regardless of the position of the last accented syllable. This avoids problems of matching the measure of line length with the treatment the text receives when set to music in the manuscripts i.e. if there are thirteen gross syllables in the line of text then there will be thirteen notes or note groups allotted to it in the musical record. Diverging from this basic count is unhelpful as it creates problems in making comparisons between the textual and musical sides of the collection.
15. See Beltrán (1986).
16. Of the works that survive, Alfonso X is probably most famous for his *cantigas d’escarnho*, although he did work across all three main genres of the Galician-Portuguese lyric.
17. The others being #075 (34 stanzas), #115, #411 and #419 (30 stanzas each).
18. We will turn to the question of text-music fit in more detail in Chapter 2.
19. This has been argued, for example, by David Wulstan (1996). Cunningham’s 2000 performing edition of the *loores* initially refers to them as “a coherent sub-corpus” but quickly acknowledges that: “Though a coherent group from the point of view of textual theme, the «Cantigas de loor» are in almost every other respect a most heterogeneous group, presenting every conceivable variety of form and rhythm, and probably most of the possible difficulties of notation too” (p. vii). Fidalgo’s 2004 edition offers the *loores* as a part of a larger edition project extending not just to the *Cantigas* as a whole but to the rest of the medieval Galician-Portuguese field.
20. Stephen Parkinson, however, has used the comparison of different treatments of the same basic story to show that some pieces appear to have been amended or amalgamated to produce the correct number of stanzas to fit in the *códices ricos*, *T* and *F*. See Parkinson (2007) for one example.
21. Parkinson (2000) dubs this “singular rhyming”.
22. Clarke (1955, p. 87) goes so far as to describe this extended use as “almost shocking”.

23. Bertolucci (2000, p. 113) notes another case - #132 - where an enjambement with word break (in *-mente*) is found in E and T but not in To; however, this is more complex as it involves a recomposition of the stanza including a change of rhyme and a change of emphasis in the presentation of the Virgin.

## CHAPTER 2: WHAT CAN SONG DO FOR THE *CANTIGAS*?

The discussion of text and music in the previous chapter largely kept these separate, discussing each in its own terms. However if - as is asserted here - the *Cantigas* are songs i.e. artistic creations consisting of both words and music, then the relationship between them will need to be investigated. This may seem an obvious point, but it is one which past scholarship has not always taken on board (or at least in meaningful fashion).<sup>1</sup> It also forces us to consider questions such as when words and music are brought together in the creative process, which in turn can affect our attitude to the written sources in which the finished songs are preserved. Re-orienting the discussion around song can also go some way to compensate for the lack of direct evidence as to what this collection is for - beyond its obvious overt devotional aspect. One of the emergent themes of the previous chapter was that of choice in the *Cantigas*: of form, shape, and compositional task, all of them reflecting larger choices made by those behind the collection to follow (or not) particular elements or practices from related medieval repertoires. We should remember that the repertoires which are most closely related - whether those of the Galician-Portuguese and Occitan troubadours or the Andalusian tradition of the *muwashshah* and *zajal* - consist primarily of songs, rather than just poems. While we may not have enough surviving materials from all of these traditions to enable a full and detailed comparison, it is still likely that approaching the *Cantigas* specifically from the point of view of song will yield better, more accurate results.

Determining the nature of the relationship between words and music can be complex, however - especially for a medieval repertory like the *Cantigas* where the information from the sources may be incomplete (by modern standards) or require more interpretation than repertoires whose textual status is more transparent. To that end this chapter will first pose a series of questions, the answers to which may be overlapping, intended to draw out the salient characteristics of that relationship. It will then seek to broaden out the discussion to take in the role of the *Cantigas* sources in the context of song, before finally considering the evidence on performance.

***How do text and music fit together?***

In keeping with what we find in other medieval monophonic repertoires, the text frame provides the primary point of interface between words and music. As Rossell (1996, p. 47) puts it: “É neste punto no que texto e música son interdependentes, converténdose o aspecto métrico no vínculo formal entre ambos”. There are only a couple of cases in the collection of potential word-painting (e.g. the oscillation of the melodic figures on the word “Balaam” in #147 R2, suggesting the noise of the stolen sheep around which the piece revolves; or the very restricted and repetitive *mudanza* melody, contrasting with the more florid refrain, in #103 - the story of a monk who enters a garden to listen to a bird singing, then leaves to discover that 300 years have passed). As no such mirroring between musical setting and content from the narrative is apparent for the vast majority of pieces, however, the evidence from the collection is that this type of linkage was of relatively low priority. Instead the concern is to fit words and music together such that the notes of the melody are divided among the syllables of text and every syllable of text is allocated a note or note group of the melody. John Stevens (1986, p. 499) has described this process as “physical” i.e. rooted in “sounds” (for this repertory, corresponding to syllables). The *Cantigas* manuscripts normally set the refrain and the first stanza of text, the remaining stanzas being copied underneath without music - although manuscript *T* sometimes offers more than one stanza with music as a consequence of its lay-out. The words are copied in first, with the music scribe later adding in the notes above.<sup>2</sup>

We have already noted that the texts of the *Cantigas* aim to adhere strictly to the text frame; thus, a musical setting that works for the first stanza should also accommodate those which follow. Nevertheless, we know that the aim of a perfectly realised text frame is not always fulfilled - individual lines may not conform to the pattern that has been set, the first stanza may have a mistake in it, or there may be a change of pattern which makes it divergent in some way from the others. An extreme example of this is provided by #113, discussed in detail by Stephen Parkinson (2007). This is a piece with chronic difficulties of metrical structure, in which an initially ambiguous, faulty or non-standard text pattern has

been further complicated by successive layers of emendations as the piece has been copied and recopied into the two manuscripts (*E* and *T*) in which it is found.

Parkinson follows the responses of the various scribes - both text scribes and music scribes - as they struggle to achieve a consistent metrical pattern in which text and music fit together, their attempts ultimately proving unsuccessful in that neither of the manuscript versions meet this aim. He suggests that starting from a primitive version of four stanzas - possibly existing in a schematic exemplar and/or on a loose sheet (Ferreira, 1994) - the *Cantigas* compilers attempted to expand the piece up to a more normal six stanzas. This required the composition of an extra two stanzas to match the original text frame; however, the pattern was misread, setting off a chain of amendments as subsequent people tried to regularise the structure in terms of syllable count. Parkinson's suggestion is that the piece was first used for *T*, where it was both amended and suffered further irregularities introduced by copying: the difficulties of fitting the resultant text to the music caused the music scribe for *T* (unusually, as Parkinson notes) to leave the staves blank. A similar process occurred again when the piece was incorporated into *E*, except that this time the music scribe attempted to adjust both text and music to get them to fit - though not entirely successfully and only for the first stanza.

*Cantiga* 113 has one of the most complex textual histories of the entire collection, but its example shows the importance of text-music fit to all those behind the *Cantigas*. Regularity of structure, in the sense of conformity to the chosen norms, is also clearly an important driver. Behind many of the instances where the structure of a piece has become distorted in transmission to the manuscripts lies some kind of non-standard structure e.g. the variable refrain of #087 or the refrainless structure of #340.<sup>3</sup> It is not surprising that in producing a collection of this size, with clear underlying choices as to the textual and musical forms employed and following principles of regularity inherited from other repertoires - not to mention a very large project requiring the gathering and reworking of source materials to the desired format, followed by the organization, compilation and copying of the newly produced pieces into the manuscripts - that those involved would develop clear expectations as to what a "*cantiga de Santa Maria*" should look like. Nor is it surprising, given the volume of materials - textual

and musical - going through this process and the exacting nature of the goal - perfectly rhymed and counted text perfectly matched to music of a virelai form - that mistakes can occur.

The emendations in the *Cantigas* sources show a concern to put things right where possible, with scribes reading and responding to what is in front of them. In this respect, they contradict the assertion by Celso Cunha (1982) regarding the secular Galician-Portuguese repertory - for which only a very small amount of music survives - that small irregularities would “disappear naturally in the accents of the melody” (my translation). He extends this to claim that “ao acompanhamento musical caberia [...] harmonizar ou tornar imperceptíveis as [...] discordâncias métricas”. If this were the case, or indeed if the manuscripts were intended as sources for performers who would be expected to correct any irregularities, then I would argue that we would not expect to see this level of concern for text-music fit. It also points to the creation of fully functional song (i.e. one in which the text and melody are properly mapped onto one another) as being important for those behind the collection - a corrective to those currents of *Cantigas* scholarship that have tended to regard the music as having similar status to the miniatures i.e. as a simple adornment of the principal component, the text.

Not all mistakes get corrected, however: problems may sometimes go ignored or unnoticed. Thus #345 (*E* only) has a problem in its setting in the first portion of its *vuelta*, where the text structure is not congruent with the corresponding section of the refrain. Lines 1 and 2 of the refrain have eight (*grave*) and seven (*agudo*) syllables respectively, whereas the first two lines of the *vuelta* continue the *mudanza* pattern of eight (*grave*) lines throughout. The music for the mismatched phrase V2, however, is simply copied as per the R2 version, with no indication in the manuscript that any discrepancy with the text has been registered. Sometimes the music scribes simply set what is there: for #018, the fourth line of the first stanza is a syllable too long compared with the corresponding second line above it and those in the following stanzas, and this is set as is in all three manuscripts. Similarly, for #169 (found in *E* and *T*) the text changes structure twice in moving from the refrain to the *vuelta*: six (*agudo*) plus seven (*grave*) going first to seven

(*grave*) plus six (*agudo*), and then to seven (*grave*) plus seven (*grave*) for the final pair of lines. The setting responds to the first of these non-congruent pairs of lines by moving the point of division in the musical material i.e. by pulling the first note of R2 back into the previous phrase to provide the extra syllable and moving the rest along, but the second goes unaccounted for in both sources, which leave the music a syllable short. It is possible that the scribes were thrown by the presence of the word “tīnnan” in the text here i.e. a form which can count two or three syllables depending on what is required, and thus missed the discrepancy between the syllables in the text and those provided for in the musical setting.

It should be noted that in the discussion above, the focus is primarily on “fit” and “setting” rather than “composition”. This is in large part a consequence of what we can see from the sources: it is this dimension of the text-music relationship that comes through best. The question of “composition” or “creation” (as opposed to “compilation” or “assembly”) still remains, however. At some point in the genesis of each piece, a decision has to be taken to bring text and music - whether these are newly composed or pre-existing - together as a song. Whether this happens only when the piece is copied into the manuscript or at some point beforehand is a matter for debate, which we will return to later in the chapter.

### ***Where do the components come from?***

All the evidence suggests that the *Cantigas* texts were purposefully created for this collection: we have next to no evidence of their existence before or afterwards. The only piece for which we have any sign of a wider existence is #040 (so a lyric *loor*, rather than a narrative *miragre*) which is found alongside other texts credited to Alfonso X in one of the manuscripts that preserve the rest of the secular Galician-Portuguese lyric, manuscript *B* (see Pellegrini, 1977). To date there is no evidence of circulation for any of the remaining 426 texts beyond Alfonso’s court: what life they had outside the *Cantigas* project is also unclear. While Alfonso’s second will contains a stipulation that some *cantigas* should be performed on feast days of the Virgin (Schaffer, 1995, p. 79; further discussion of this below), there is



little other than general knowledge regarding musicians or visiting troubadours at his court, or the active interest the king himself is likely to have had as a contributor to the secular Galician-Portuguese repertory and (potentially) to the *Cantigas*. While it has long been known that the source materials for the *miragres* were drawn from Latin prose miracle collections circulating throughout Europe as well as collections from local shrines (e.g. see Mettmann's edition, as well as Parkinson & Jackson, 2006; extensive information on the links between individual pieces and source collections is available from the *Oxford Cantigas de Santa Maria database* at <http://csm.mml.ox.ac.uk/?p=database>), these materials appear to have been reworked at the Alfonsine court to produce the versified Galician-Portuguese accounts represented by the *Cantigas* texts.

The context is somewhat different for the melodies, however. Apart from a few identified cases, we have little or no information as to where these have come from. The most well known is #340, which is a contrafact of an *alba* by the troubadour Cadenet (*S'anc fui belha ni prezada*) i.e. new words set to the melody of the Cadenet piece. This was a common practice in the medieval period, so it is likely that there are other contrafacts in the collection; however, the relative lack of music that survives in written form from this period and the degree of variability (or *mouvance*) between written-down versions of the same melody make their identification more difficult. For example, it has been tentatively suggested that the melody shared by the pair of pieces #293 and #297 would fit the text of a secular piece by Alfonso, *O genete pois remete*, but no music for this survives to enable a comparison. We know that melodies could move between sacred and secular environments, so it is possible that the *Cantigas* melodies draw on many sources; equally well, with no information to the contrary, they could be newly composed especially for the collection.

To help us recognise such cases when we come across them, it is worth noting that the collection itself contains instances of melodic re-use and resemblance - but at different levels. It is here that the “tidiness” of the *Cantigas* sources (compared to those from other musical medieval repertories) comes into play. The degree of agreement between them means that we can track melodic material through the collection in ways that are not always possible for repertories with a higher degree of variation between sources. This enables us to build up a more comprehensive picture of the parameters for re-use, which in turn may be helpful when looking for related melodies elsewhere.

The tightest level is represented by a genuine internal contrafact: the pair of pieces #213 and #377, which share the same melody but have different texts. Both texts have the same metrical structure, and the differences between the melodies (shown in Table 1) are small and do not impact on their overall identity, which can be clearly traced through from beginning to end. However, as with the repeated pieces found in manuscript *E* (discussed in the previous chapter), it is important to note that the melodies are not identical on a note-by-note basis: both variations in ornamentation and scribal mistakes in setting the text (e.g. the miscounting of “tīinna” at #377, phrase M4) have produced differences between the versions. With #213 occurring earlier in the collection it might be tempting to assume that this represents the “original” piece, with #377 as a “re-used” version created as the compilers began to run short. But in reality we have nothing other than position in the collection to indicate precedence - it is possible that #377 came first but was somehow overlooked, or that both these pieces make use of a melody from elsewhere.

It is often assumed that melodic and metrical structures must be identical in order for a melody to be re-used (e.g. see Marshall, 1978, p. 20), and indeed many of the attempts to postulate contrafaction in cases where no music survives make their appeal to points of metrical resemblance. This may be true up to a point of contrafaction where it occurs as part of parody, or in other contexts where it is important to be able to recognise the model and appreciate the similarity.

Table 1. Contrafact #213-#377: melodic differences.

Musical phrases	#213	#377
R1	plain note <i>f_e d</i> simple <i>e d</i> cadence	plica <i>f_0 d</i> ornamented <i>f_0 c</i> cadence
R2	opening <i>d e f</i> etc. plain note <i>f_e d</i>	opening <i>c d f</i> etc. (matching R1) plica <i>f_0 d</i>
R3	plain note <i>c_b a</i> simple <i>c g</i> cadence	plica <i>c_0 a</i> ornamented <i>c_0 g</i> cadence (→ R1)
R4	opening <i>f f_0 a</i> etc.	opening <i>f g a</i> etc.
M1	plain note <i>c_b a</i>	plica <i>c_0 a</i>
M2	-	-
M3	plain note <i>c_b a</i>	plica <i>c_0 a</i>
M4	opening <i>f f_0 a</i> etc. plain note <i>e_d c</i>	opening <i>f f_0 a a</i> (+1 syllable <i>tīinna</i> ) plica <i>e_0 c</i>
V1	plain note <i>f_e d</i> simple <i>f c</i> cadence	plica <i>f_0 d</i> ornamented <i>f_0 c</i> cadence
V2	opening <i>c d e f</i> etc. (textual corrections) plain note <i>f_e d</i>	opening <i>c d f</i> etc. (→ R1) plica <i>f_0 d</i>
V3	plain note <i>c_b a</i> opening <i>g a c c</i> etc. simple <i>c g</i> cadence	plica <i>c_0 a</i> opening <i>g a c</i> etc. ornamented <i>c_0 g</i> cadence
V4	opening <i>g f_0</i> plain note <i>e_d c</i>	opening <i>f f_0</i> plica <i>e_0 c</i>

However, the next group of pieces shows that melodic re-use can occur outwith identical - or even congruent - metrical structures. Example 1 shows three texts (#011, #135 and #184) that are clearly of different shapes. A variety of line types are used across the three pieces, but while there is some overlap between them the combinations are all different, leading to three different metrical structures.

It might therefore seem unlikely that these pieces would share the same melody; they do, but with adjustments (see Example 2). #011 presents us with a typical *virelai*, refrain followed by a contrasting *mudanza* with the *vuelta* returning to the music of the refrain. This anticipates that the metrical structure of the refrain and *vuelta* will match, which indeed they do for #011. However, neither of the other two have metrical congruence between the refrain and the back portion of their respective stanzas: this is clear for #184, with its mixture of short and long lines. #135's stanza is superficially similar in structure to its refrain but does not have any portion that is congruent in overall structure, while its seven-line stanza does not have room for both a *mudanza* (i.e. something contrasting which is repeated) and a *vuelta* corresponding to its four-line refrain. Neither of these texts will therefore naturally fit into a melody of *virelai* form, at least in the way in which these commonly appear in the *Cantigas*.

What we find is that in each case, the structure of the melody has been changed to accommodate the differently-shaped texts. The melody concerned provides all the musical material for each of the three settings - there are some places where this "stretches" (e.g. to cover the longer refrain found in #011), but not to the point that "new" material has been introduced. The melody, with its two contrasting sections, remains identifiable throughout. However, the *virelai* form of #011 disappears as the musical material is "re-engineered" to fit: phrases are moved around, and the discrete segments of refrain, *mudanza* and *vuelta* are lost (e.g. in the stanza of #135). Other elements which we might have considered "structural" features also disappear, such as the open/closed structures found in #011 and #135 but not in #184, or the variant phrase openings found in #011. This is a reminder that we need to be careful in making assumptions that a particular element or feature will necessarily travel with the melody as it is re-used. #184 also offers a useful caution in that the melody appears to have been applied first to the stanza rather than the refrain (most pieces in the *Cantigas* can be seen to begin with the refrain, from which the stanza music then develops or responds to). The refrain here appears to be derived from the stanza setting rather than the other way round, and it is important to realise that this is a possibility, if an uncommon one.

Example 1. Texts of #011, #135 and #184 (refrain and first stanza).

**#011**

*Macar ome per folia  
aginna caer  
pod' en pecado,  
do ben de Santa Maria  
non dev' a seer  
desasperado.*

Poren direi todavia  
com' en hũa abadia  
un tesoureiro avia,  
monge que trager  
con mal recado  
a ssa fazenda sabia,  
por a Deus perder  
o malfadado.

*Refrain* 8G 5A 5G 8G 5A 5G  
*Stanza* 8G 8G  
8G 5A 5G 8G 5A 5G

*mudanza  
vuelta*

**#135**

*Aquel podeades jurar  
que é ben de mal guardado  
o que a Virgen fillar  
vai por seu acomendado.*

Desto vos quero dizer,  
per com' oý retraer,  
un miragre, ond' aver  
podeades gran gasallado  
des que fordes entender  
o que a Virgen fazer  
e mostrar foi no condado

*Refrain* 7A 8G 7A 8G  
*Stanza* 7A 7A 7A 8G 7A 7A 8G

**#184**

*A Madre de Deus  
tant' á en ssi gran vertude,  
per que aos seus  
acorre e da saude.*

E de tal razon com' esta | un miragre mui fremoso  
vos direi que fez a Virgen, | Madre do Rei poderoso,  
en terra de Santiago, | en un logar montannoso,  
[hu] hũa moller morava | que era prenn' ameude

*Refrain* 5A 8G 5A 8G  
*Stanza* 8G / 8G 8G / 8G 8G / 8G 8G / 8G

*G/A = rhyme type at line end    G = grave (ends stressed + unstressed)    A = agudo (ends on stressed syllable)*  
*number = number of syllables in line*

Example 2. #011 group.

(11) R1, R2, R3

Ma-car o-me per fo-li-a // a-gi-nna ca-er // pod'en pe-ca-do

(184) S1, S2

E de tal ra-zon com'es-ta / un mi-ra-gre mui fre-mo-so

(135) R1, R2

A-quel po-de-des ju-rar // que é ben-do mal guar-da-do

(11) M1

Po-ren di-rei to-da-vi-a

(184) S6

en un lo-gar mon-ta-nno-so

(135) S6

o que a Vir-gen fa-zer

over the course of the collection. Of the three versions of the melody found here, #011 presents the clearest and most regular structure while #135 and #184 look more like adaptations to fit texts of a non-standard shape. This may be according undue privilege to regularity and adherence to the norms of the collections, however. As with the previous example, we should be wary of assuming that #011 represents the “original” of the melody - and the perspective may change if further versions of this melody are identified, either in the *Cantigas* or elsewhere.

So we have seen that the same melody can be applied to quite differently shaped texts, which greatly broadens the scope both for identifying musical material which is re-used within the collection and finding relationships with outside sources. We have also seen how a melody can be restructured in different contexts, with some features remaining and others being dropped. In the previous example, the extent of the resemblance - common material covering the whole of each piece and the lack of extraneous material - helped to make the relationship clear despite the differing treatments of the melody. But what happens if the scale diminishes e.g. if the resemblance only covers part of a piece?

Example 3 shows the *mudanza* sections from a group of five pieces (#198, #221, #309, #364 and #381) which appear to use the same melody - but only in the *mudanza*, the surrounding refrain/*vuelta* sections being different in each case. This again is important in a *Cantigas* context because it reminds us that we need to look beyond the refrain or the initial portion of a piece in search of melodic similarities. (The only one of these pieces to show any link between *mudanza* and refrain is #381, where the same melodic pattern appears as the second phrase of the four that make up its refrain). There are no significant differences of metrical structure here since all five pieces proceed predominantly in eight *grave* lines, #381 being the only one to alternate these with seven *agudo* in its *mudanza*. Yet again we find differences in the way that this material has been used to form the *mudanza*: three pieces (#221, #309 and #381) have similar but not identical open/closed structures; #198 presents a balanced pair of phrases which is then repeated; while #364 effectively offers us four repetitions of the same phrase. We see a discretionary element in the form of the *plicas* which appear in some of the versions -

Example 3. #198 group.

Handwritten musical score for Example 3, #198 group. The score consists of seven staves. The first staff is a single line. The next three staves are grouped by a brace on the left, with circled numbers 221, 309, and 364 next to them. The last two staves are also grouped by a brace on the left, with circled numbers 381 and 391 next to them. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, beams, and slurs. Handwritten annotations above and below the staves provide instructions like 'M1 = M3', 'M2 = M4', 'M2 (open)', 'M4 (closed)', 'as above', 'then', 'p = plica', and 'R2'.

Staff 1:  $M1 = M3$  |  $M2 = M4$

Staff 2 (221):  $M1 = M3$  |  $M2$  (open)

Staff 3 (309):  $M1 = M3$  |  $M4$  (closed)  
as above then

Staff 4 (364):  $M1$  |  $M2 = M3 = M4$   
then as  $M1$

Staff 5 (381):  $M1 = M3$  |  $M2$  (open)

Staff 6 (391):  $M4$  (closed)  
as above then

Staff 7:  $R2$  |  $p = plica$



interestingly, in similar places across the pieces where they appear - and the use of variant openings (e.g. in #381).

The similarity of melodic pattern across the five *mudanza* sections is clear, but what is also clear is that it does not come attached to any particular musical structure. The amount of musical material involved is also considerably smaller: Example 3 could be argued to consist of variations on a single common phrase. What we have then, here, is re-use of a tune or “common strain” rather than a melody in its entirety. This is still a significant resemblance, but one that is much more fleeting and hard to detect than the cases of larger-scale re-use described above. The re-occurrence of the same *mudanza* material with different refrains makes sense in the tonal context of these pieces: they are all based on *g* and share the normal range of around an octave, so the re-used tune provides the tonal contrast in keeping with the switch from refrain to *mudanza*, exploring the upper part of the mode before dropping back down for the *vuelta*. Could this offer an explanation for the re-use here? If so, it could point us back towards a more mechanical view of the settings in the *Cantigas*, with melodies being assembled out of diverse materials according to the requirements of the musical context, perhaps by musically-literate scribes or compilers rather than “composers” as such. Many pieces in the collection rely on small differences between phrases to generate contrast, so the construction of larger structures or sections out of a relatively sparse amount of melodic material is not out of line with what we might expect (see #288 for an extreme example). The degree to which the *Cantigas* represent “organic” melodies that have been gathered or created specially for their texts - or the degree to which they represent a repertory of “constructed” pieces put together by those responsible for the manuscripts and the overall project - has yet to be determined. The more we can learn about musical structures and materials and their re-use in the collection, the more information we will have to contribute towards these questions.

Before moving on, we should sound a note of caution: not all musical resemblances found in the *Cantigas* will be significant. Example 4 shows six similar phrases drawn from five separate pieces: #392, #389, #366, #273 and #205. It is

Example 4. #366 group.

Handwritten musical notation for the #366 group, consisting of five staves. A vertical bar line is drawn between the first and second measures of each staff. The notation includes various annotations and musical symbols:

- Staff 1:** Circled number 366. Annotations:  $M1 = M3$  above the first measure,  $M2 = M4$  above the second measure. The melody consists of eighth notes in the first measure and a half note in the second measure.
- Staff 2:** Circled number 389. Annotations:  $M1 = M3$  above the first measure,  $M2 = M4$  above the second measure. The melody consists of eighth notes in the first measure and a half note in the second measure.
- Staff 3:** Circled number 392. Annotations:  $R3 = R1$  above the first measure,  $M2 = M4$  above the second measure. The melody consists of eighth notes in the first measure and a half note in the second measure.
- Staff 4:** Circled number 273. Annotations:  $R4$  above the second measure. The melody consists of eighth notes in the first measure and a half note in the second measure.
- Staff 5:** Circled number 205. Annotations:  $V4$  above the second measure. The melody consists of eighth notes in the first measure and a half note in the second measure.

possible that these phrases look similar because they are indeed related, but we are very close here to the musical “default values” for this repertory. These phrases proceed almost entirely in syllabic stepwise motion,<sup>4</sup> with #366 offering perhaps the best illustration of just how simple a melody can be. Certainly we have similarity of melodic contour and setting across these examples, but is this significant? I would argue not. A melody has to go somewhere, and the pitches need to be fitted to the syllables of the text. To constitute “re-use” we need to have something meaningful and identifiable that is being “re-used” - otherwise we are in the realms of coincidence and overlap arising from a pool of common resources (e.g. patterns associated with particular melodic modes), the default values for the repertory and questions of “house style”. While the scale of the resemblances noted over the previous three examples may have got smaller each time, the judgement was essentially the same: that the resemblance was meaningful and therefore significant. This was established by appealing to the distinctiveness of the material concerned, through a combination of the melodic patterns and overall musical structure supported by the syllabification and setting, with a further appeal to notation (if not rhythm) available if necessary. Where such distinctiveness cannot be established, we need to be careful in drawing conclusions as to what the resemblance actually represents.

It is worth exploring the differing degrees of melodic resemblance for the light they can shed both on potential musical relationships outside the collection (we may need to be more flexible when looking for these than traditional views of contrafactum have sometimes suggested) and on practices of composition and setting within it.<sup>5</sup> Whether the picture that emerges is one of materials being re-used in a mechanical way by compiler/assemblers, or of melodies being incorporated/adapted from elsewhere, there is surely more to be gained that can supplement the somewhat meagre information on the origins of the music we have so far.

***Text into music or music into text?***

The only surviving treatise from the Galician-Portuguese troubadour repertory, the *Arte de trovar*,<sup>6</sup> offers an interesting possibility in its discussion of the *cantiga de seguir* - a genre based on contrafaction.<sup>7</sup> Here it stresses the need for congruence of text structure between the *seguir* and its model, giving the fit of text and music as its reason. It does, however, use two different formulations to communicate this, on the first occasion explaining that this is “pera poder ã elas caber aquel som meesmo” (i.e. that the music should be able to be fitted into the words), and on the two instances which follow that it is “pera poder caber ã aquel som meesmo” (i.e. that the words should be able to be fitted into the music). While the *Arte de trovar* could simply be referring to the same thing in two different ways, it is intriguing to think that it could also be referring to two distinct but related phenomena: one in which the music is shaped around the demands of the text, and another in which the roles are reversed so that the music becomes a mould into which the text must be fitted. In terms of process, are there pieces that display signs of text and music being fitted inside each other?

At a very fundamental level, the answer is yes: Gerardo Huseby (1983) noted that the basic underlying *virelai* structure, as judged by the presence of clear cadences and parallel use of melodic material (e.g. in open/closed phrase structures), is often larger in scale than the structure of the text as measured by rhymes and hemistichs. We therefore commonly find two text phrases fitting within a larger musical one, sometimes more in the case of pieces which employ very short lines. This type of nesting of congruent structures, particularly of text into music, is routine throughout the collection and tells us little except that the structures are of different sizes. Text and music here are not in conflict: it is a mistake to expect the structural divisions of one of the components to determine the other (e.g. in arguing for the use of long lines with caesura as opposed to shorter lines in hemistichs). More interesting, however, are those pieces whose textual structures are not consistent or which present us with ambiguous metrical or musical forms. In those cases, the application of music to

text (or vice versa) at the very least represents a contemporary interpretation of the unclear or disputed structures, and as such can potentially be more enlightening.

We have already seen how pieces that do not conform to the structural norms of the collection can prove confusing - for scribes and modern editors alike.


*Cantiga* 407 (found only in *To*; see Example 5) is such a piece, in that it presents us with refrain and stanza structures that do not match. The frame of the stanza is clear and predictable enough, with a customary *zajal* pattern of three eleven-syllable lines followed by a seven-syllable one linking back to the refrain.


However, the rhymes of the refrain indicate alternating eight and five-syllable lines in -ER (rhyming *cofonder*, *acorrer*, *valer* and *defender* - though not including *quer*, as this has an open “e” which was considered a different sound).

This indeed is the metrical structure given by Anglés’ musical edition, which hedges its bets on whether to consider the refrain as four shorter units or two thirteen-syllable lines, marking a point of division after *cofonder* and *valer* but not treating them as phrases in their own right. In this he follows the musical punctuation of *To*, which has a vertical line (normally a phrase-end marker, though it can also be used to mark off the end of a larger note group) only after *acorrer* and *defender*, thus creating two identical longer musical phrases into which the refrain is fitted. When we come to the stanza setting, this offers us an example of the looser *virelai* form found in the *Cantigas*: a contrasting *mudanza* consisting of something repeated, followed by a *vuelta* that starts with a bridge phrase beginning in similar style to the *mudanza* before returning to the material used for the eight-syllable portions of the refrain, this material then being repeated in the concluding phrase.

Mettmann’s edition, on the other hand, attempts to create a match between the back portion of the stanza and the refrain by isolating a seven-syllable line at the end of the latter (“*valer e del defender*”) and then an eleven-syllable line above it (“*nos quer acorrer Santa Maria e*”). This leaves an irregular eight syllables for the first line of the refrain, though the metrical analysis he gives mistakenly claims this as seven. His middle line is also left with what would be


Example 5. Cantiga #407.


R1   $13A = 8A + 5A$

R2   $13A = 8A + 5A$   
compare R1

S1   $11A$

S2   $11A$   
compare S1

S3   $11A$

S4   $7A$   
compare R1

What can song do for the *Cantigas*? 78

an anomalous *esdrújulo* ending (i.e. with two unstressed syllables at the end of the line) since this is not (to my knowledge) found elsewhere in the collection. Apart from the expectation of correspondence between the two portions of text, he may have been misled by the nesting of the smaller textual units inside the larger musical phrases of the refrain, which is reflected in both textual and musical punctuation of the manuscript. As well as the vertical lines in the melody, *To* also includes points in the text marking ends of textual units after *defender* (end of the refrain), *vi* (first phrase of the stanza) and after *fazer* (end of the stanza). There is also a point after *Maria* in the refrain, but this is a clause-end marker rather than a unit-end one.

While the musical setting here provides clarification of what might otherwise be an ambiguous metrical structure, it does not in itself confirm or deny the structure of the text. Whether we consider the the refrain as consisting of four short textual units or two longer ones with internal rhyme, for example, is a matter of choice. It makes no difference to the melodic structure of the refrain if we choose to divide it up into four shorter units to match the text: indeed the three-note figure on the second syllable of *cofonder* and *valer*, together with the recurrence of material from what could be an eight-syllable refrain phrase at the *vuelta*, suggests that such a division is eminently possible. Textual and musical structures here are simply co-existing within the larger framework of the piece: it is not a question of deciding between them. What the setting of #407 does show, however, is that the first possibility outlined by the *Arte de trovar* (text fitted into music) does exist beyond the normal nesting of congruent phrase structures - at least in the case of its refrain.

The opposite phenomenon - music fitted into text - can be harder to identify: in part because it is harder to interpret the evidence we have (e.g. about what constitutes a division within a musical structure, or the distinction between “fit” and “(re-)composition”), and in part because the musical structures tend to be larger in scale. We have already seen with the #011 group how melodic material can be reshaped to accommodate texts of different shapes. Where we do find larger textual structures, however, we can see music fitting inside them in

Table 2. Cantiga #427, refrain and first stanza (text).

Stanza no.	Position in stanza	Text	No. of syllables	End rhyme	Rhyme type
R0	1	Todo-los bẽes que nos Deus	8	a	<i>agudo</i>
R0	2	quis fazer polo Fillo seu,	8	b	<i>agudo</i>
R0	3	nos conpriu quando aos seus	8	a	<i>agudo</i>
R0	4	o seu Sant' Espirito deu	8	b	<i>agudo</i>
R0	5	que prometeu.	4	c*	<i>agudo</i>
S1	1	Ca per el o sabemos connoçer,	10	d	<i>agudo</i>
S1	2	e connoçendo, amar e temer,	10	d	<i>agudo</i>
S1	3	e demais dá-nos grand' esforço de prender	12	d	<i>agudo</i>
S1	4	morte por el, nenbrando-nos de com' el por nos morreu.	15	c	<i>agudo</i>

\* The rhyme *prometeu* here uses the closed “e” rather than the open one of *seu* and *Deu*.

similar fashion. #427 is another piece with an asymmetrical text whose stanza structure (see Table 2) does not correspond to its refrain.

With its mixture of eight- and four-syllable lines, there is no way that the refrain text structure can be made to correspond to the fifteen-syllable line that ends the stanza, which is also at the large end of the range for single-unit lines in the *Cantigas*. The musical setting for this piece - another loose *virelai* - is given in Example 6. The refrain appears to be largely through-composed: Anglés gives five phrases corresponding to the rhyme structure of the text, and this is supported by the musical punctuation in *To* (a vertical stroke in the melody at the end of each text phrase). The paired ten-syllable phrases at the start of the stanza, meanwhile, occupy the *mudanzas*. When we come to the *vuelta*, S3 and S4 are produced by compressing the refrain phrases R1/R2 and R3/R4/R5



Example 6. Cantiga #427.

R1 To-do los bẽ-es que nos Deus

R2 quis fã-zer po-lo Fi-llo seu

R3 nos con-priu quan-do a- os seus

R4/R5 o seu Sant'Es- pi-ri- tu deu que pro-me-teu

S1 Ca por el o sa-be-mos co-nno-cer

S2 compare S1 e co-nno-cen-do a-mar e te-mer

S3 e de-mais dá-nos grand'es-for-ço de pren-der

S4 mor-te por el nen-bran-do nos de com'el por nos mor-reu

respectively. The four-syllable motif that opens the piece (marked as “1” in the example) is grafted onto R2 (marked as “2”) in its entirety to provide the twelve syllables needed for S3. The fifteen-syllable S4 similarly takes the first four syllables of R3 (“3”) and the four-syllable motif (“5”) from R5 that concludes the piece, splicing these around a shortened version of R4 (“4”) to give the correct length of phrase.

We thus have musical phrases (R2 and R4) which appear as autonomous units in the refrain but are then subsumed into the stanza phrases along with shorter portions from the surrounding musical material, apparently in response to the demands of an irregular text with larger than normal divisions of structure i.e. a case of “music into text”. The use of the four-syllable motives as “blocks” in the construction of the larger musical phrases is interesting, as is the fact that the “melodic engineering” here appears to be kept to the minimum necessary to achieve a corresponding structure underpinned by the *virelai*: the refrain elements are preserved in the order in which we first hear them, and the repeat becomes more exact from the point at which the structural mismatch has been solved. Given their role on the musical side, it might seem natural to look for corresponding four-syllable units in the text; and the manuscript punctuation of the first stanza initially seems to point that way, with a dot in the text after “morte por el”, and a vertical line in the melody after “de com’ el”, together with what looks like the beginnings of another line after “morte por el”. But once again the text scribe’s dot is a clause-end marker rather than a unit-end one, which together with the coincidence of similar grammatical structures at these places may have momentarily caused the music scribe to see this as a possible internal/additional rhyme point within the text. Examination of the subsequent stanzas, however, not only shows no trace of internal rhyme structures, but also that it is not possible to isolate four-syllable units - either at the beginnings or ends of the corresponding text phrases - consistently over the course of the text i.e. without violating word boundaries.<sup>8</sup>

What these two examples show is that both the possibilities hinted at in the *Arte de trovar* (words fitted into music and music fitted into words) are found in the

collection - something that is useful to know when working in a context of melodic re-use and contrafaction. But they do not provide any hard and fast indications of which element takes precedence, so that this remains to be established on a case-by-case basis. *Cantiga #427*, in particular, demonstrates the autonomy of the textual and musical structures within a piece: just because a structural feature or division is found in one element, this does not mean that it will automatically be carried over to the other, beyond the basic requirement that text and music should be properly fitted together. Manuscript punctuation can provide valuable clues as to how the different scribes interpreted the piece in front of them, but needs to be viewed within its context.

### ***What about rhythm?***

Questions of rhythm have long proved problematic for the *Cantigas*, in large part owing to the difficulties in interpreting the musical notation. While roughly contemporaneous as a repertory with the earliest forms of notation to systematically record rhythm (or at least those for which we have explanatory treatises, such as Franconian notation or the system of rhythmic modes) it does not conform to the precepts of any of them, despite some points in common.<sup>9</sup> But what the manuscripts do present is developed and systematic enough<sup>10</sup> to suggest that they are attempting to convey a concrete rhythm for each piece; this differentiates the *Cantigas* from the Occitan troubadour repertory, for which it is considered that the evidence from their sources is too ambiguous for any particular rhythm to be isolated (and pieces are generally studied without it). Too little survives in the way of notated music from the Galician-Portuguese troubadour repertory, meanwhile, to establish any meaningful comparison.

The fact that most available recordings of the *Cantigas* still base themselves around the 1943 transcriptions by Higinio Anglés is testament to the enduring and characterful nature of the solutions he adopted (as well as to the lack of musical editions since). However his edition is very much a product of its time in its reaction against a particular methodology then current in musical scholarship (i.e.

the theory of rhythmic modes as applied to monophonic secular repertoires) and while the achievement it represents is still rightly respected it is no longer considered to be definitive.<sup>11</sup> Following a remark by the historian and theorist Gil de Zamora referring to the “musical proportions” of the *Cantigas* melodies,<sup>12</sup> Anglés constructed his own method of transcribing the melodies based on close examination of the Escorial notation. His conclusions contained a number of new and then-radical ideas: the co-existence of modal and non-modal mensural notation, the possibility of mixed modal rhythm combining different rhythmic modes within one melody, and the possibility of combining binary and ternary rhythms within the same piece. While his editions of the pieces themselves - fully worked-out transcriptions with time signatures and bar lines - may have been called into question, both for their accuracy and objectiveness and as times and understandings of medieval music have changed, the idea that further solutions are to be found in the notation has found favour among scholars. The most notable contributor in this respect has been Manuel Pedro Ferreira, who has recently embarked on detailed transcriptions from all three musical manuscripts (*E*, *T* and *To*) with a view to establishing a more accurate picture of the notation(s) found. This will include the differences in notation between the two Escorial manuscripts, and between these and *To* - and it is hoped will lead to an eventual new musical edition to succeed that of Anglés.<sup>13</sup> As yet, however, no consensus has emerged on the interpretation of the notation found in the musical sources.

This lack of agreement as to what precisely the notation represents in terms of the rhythm of a piece is a point of difficulty for the analysis of the *Cantigas* as song: after all, something we might consider to be a major component is missing. Responses to this have varied across the literature, with some commentators (e.g. David Wulstan, 1996, 1998, 2000) continuing to offer fully worked-out rhythmic transcriptions, though often without explanation of the principles behind them.<sup>14</sup> Others (e.g. John Stevens, 1990) have appealed to the *virelai*'s origins in dance-song to argue for regular rhythmic patterns, for example that “we would expect balanced symmetrical phrases and equal metrical units within the phrase” (p. 451).<sup>15</sup> Yet there are many repertoires which have similar origins in dance forms but have nonetheless progressed beyond the basic rhythmic characteristics of their

source form (the rhythmic complexities of a Bach *allemande*, for example). We have nothing to indicate that the *Cantigas* were ever intended for dancing, so we should be wary of imposing over-strict assumptions about their rhythm, whatever regularities may emerge from the notation. By contrast, other scholars (e.g. Hendrik van der Werf, 1987) have argued for a “free” or “declamatory” rhythm in which the performer would be free to vary the accentuation given to the melody from stanza to stanza, according to the distribution of stressed syllables in the text (p. 232). Antoni Rossell (1996) has taken this even further, calling for the rhythm to be varied from line to line.<sup>16</sup> This is an approach carried over from studies of the troubadour repertory for which, as has already been noted, no secure rhythm can be established from the written sources. However, the *Cantigas* are not in the same situation, and even van der Werf himself admits that their textual history - as it can be deduced from the manuscripts - looks quite different.<sup>17</sup> The notation of the *Cantigas* appears to represent a progression, in terms of its capacity to indicate precise rhythms, since that of the major troubadour manuscripts (copied some time after the peak of the repertory they preserve and therefore somewhat at a distance from their contents). If so, then it is as anachronistic to discard that evidence and treat the collection like an earlier repertory, as it might be to impose rhythmic features such as time signatures and bar lines expected in modern ones<sup>18</sup> - even if, as here, it is sometimes deemed more convenient to work on pieces minus the rhythm.

As Ferreira (1993) has noted, the most secure element of the *Cantigas* notation is the alternation of long and short figures through the use of *virga* and *punctum*, and this is the aspect around which most transcriptions are based. Ferreira points to two means of comparison by which this can be extended beyond the simple figures to cover more of the notational symbols: the principle of *aequipollentia* in pieces which proceed in patterns conforming to the rhythmic modes (i.e. that figures which substitute each other in the same modal context are likely to have the same durational value), and substitutions that are found between different versions of the same phrase as it occurs and re-occurs as part of the *virelai* form. By means of these comparisons, he identifies a number of figures that consistently substitute longs, others that consistently substitute shorts, and others - like the *tripunctum* -

whose value is ambiguous and must be determined from the context (Ferreira, 1993, pp. 603-604). This process can be carried out both for the Escorial manuscripts (*T* and *E*) and for *To*, with the comparison between the same piece in different manuscripts providing additional support. While it may not in itself provide a comprehensive deciphering of the *Cantigas* notation, it does at least offer a basis on which further studies can be built.

With the evidence on musical rhythm proving ambiguous, it might seem logical to turn to the rhythm of the texts in search of further enlightenment (even if, as in the case of van der Werf and Rossell, it is to prove a negative i.e. that no secure rhythm can be established). Yet text rhythm can also be difficult to define. What constitutes a “stressed” syllable in this context? Is it based solely on lexical stress (i.e. the word as it would be pronounced in isolation), or is this influenced by the surrounding context (i.e. the word as it occurs in a phrase)? We have already noted the highly structured nature of the *Cantigas* texts: what effect does versification have? When the versified text becomes a song, how do any existing rhythms interact with musical rhythm?

Even the first question in this series, what constitutes a stressed syllable, is not straightforward. We can see that the rhyme at the end of each line depends on stress i.e. to distinguish between an *agudo* and a *grave* rhyme. But the stress patterns to this point are harder to establish. We can certainly take lexical stress as a starting point; for polysyllabic words, this allows us to distinguish syllables that are clearly stressed under the normal pronunciation of the word from those that are unstressed e.g. *ome* “O-me” or *fazer* “fa-ZER”, though the question of secondary stress (within longer words) remains open. For compound future or conditional forms where a weak pronoun or article is inserted in the middle of the word it may well make sense on grammatical grounds to count more than one stress (e.g. *dar-ll-ei* “DAR-ll-EI”, *acha-lo-ás* “ACHA-lo-ÁS”, *prazer-m-ia* “PRA-zer-m-IA” etc.), and perhaps also for abverbs ending in *-mente* and diminutives in *-zinho*.<sup>19</sup> The *Cantigas* texts also contain many elisions, where a final unstressed syllable is dropped, usually for reasons of syllable count: it might therefore seem reasonable to treat the shortened form of these words similarly to the normal form i.e. *pode* “POD-e”

implying the elided form *pod'* should be treated as "POD'", or for cases preceded by an elided pronoun to follow the stresses of the noun or verb form e.g. *s'ouve* "s'OU-ve" or *d'arada* "d'ar-AD-A". These provisions cover the polysyllabic words found, but the *Cantigas* in places also present chains of monosyllables - sometimes up to four at a time - where it is hard to determine definitively which of them carry stress. Clearly some words will be more important, both grammatically and in terms of content, than others. Elided verbs and nouns, for example, are likely to carry more significance than articles or weak pronouns occurring as part of the grammar. We also find grammatical constructions that consist of more than one element e.g. contractions of the preposition *a* with articles in forms like *aa* or *aos*. These may not belong in the same category as "content" words such as verbs and nouns, and their stress patterns are not clear.

To cover as full a range of forms as possible, we may need to go beyond the simple opposition of stressed vs. unstressed syllables and propose a third category: that of the "semi-stressed" syllable.<sup>20</sup> If we assume that "content" monosyllables (verbs and nouns) will be stressed, that elided forms will follow the stress patterns of the non-elided version, and allow polysyllabic words only one stress (apart from the limited exceptions suggested above), that will enable us to regard some of the other syllables in the phrase as clearly unstressed (i.e. the other syllables of polysyllabic words). We can then go on to make a further distinction between the remaining monosyllabic elements, with those carrying more significance - such as possessives, prepositions, conjunctions, adverbs or strong pronouns - classed as semi-stressed, while articles and weak pronouns whose function is primarily grammatical can be classed as unstressed. It also provides a means of dealing with contractions like *aos* = *a* + *os*, where the preposition can be differentiated from the article through its classification as a semi-stressed syllable. This not only gives us a more accurate picture of the function of words within the text (keeping lexical stress as the guiding principle), but the ambiguity of the semi-stressed category allows us to take a more flexible view of what these syllables might be contributing to the rhythm of the text.

To illustrate, let us examine the text of the refrain and first two stanzas of Cantiga #156 (shown in Table 3; the music for this piece is given in Ch. 1). Syllables classed as stressed, unstressed and semi-stressed are indicated by 1, 0 and 9 respectively.<sup>21</sup>

The first thing to note is that, other than at line ends, no clear pattern of syllable stress emerges from the text - regardless of the role of the semi-stressed syllables. We can see this from the distribution of the stressed syllables alone: these are not consistently deployed in the course of the text. Nor can a consistent pattern be achieved by “promoting” or “demoting” semi-stressed syllables to carry more or less weight. While some positions here (e.g. syllable 2) may be more likely to have a stressed syllable (possibly due to its proximity to the start of the line) and others (e.g. syllable 4) appear more likely to have an unstressed or semi-stressed syllable, the overall picture is one of flexibility in the parts of the line preceding the rhyme, with the pattern of stresses only “firming up” as we approach the rhyme itself. This picture of inconsistent stress patterns between lines and stanzas is not confined to this particular piece: it is mirrored across the collection as a whole.

So it appears that lexical stress on its own will not provide answers to the question of ambiguous rhythm. This might at first seem to bear out the hypotheses of Rossell and van der Werf i.e. that the text has a variable rhythm which should be carried across to the musical setting. But it addresses only the first of the questions on text rhythm that were raised above. The *Cantigas* texts do not consist of words in isolation, but words that are fitted both into grammatical structures and into the numerical structures of the versified text. Both of these potentially represent other types of rhythm for the texts. The first is problematic: how do we know what the rhythms of spoken medieval Galician-Portuguese were? We have no means of establishing a comparison, except perhaps by comparing the *Cantigas* to samples of contemporary Galician-Portuguese prose. Even then we will be dealing with written, non-musical texts, so the comparison will not be exact and may be limited in scope. Without clues as to how to interpret the rhythm of the written texts, it is also hard to judge the impact of the poetic syntax and gestures, themselves a departure from normal prose rhythm. The second possibility is potentially more



Table 3. Cantiga #156, refrain and first two stanzas.

Stanza no.	Pos. in stanza	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
R0	1	0 A	1 ma-	0 dre	9 do	9 que	9 de	1 ter-	0 ra
R0	2	0 pri-	1 meir'	1 o-	0 me	1 foi	0 fa-	1 zer,	
R0	3	9 ben	1 pod'	0 a	1 lin-	0 gua	0 ta-	1 lla-	0 da
R0	4	0 fa-	1 zer	9 que	1 po-	0 ssa	0 cre-	1 cer.	
S1	1	1 Dest'	0 un	9 mui	0 ma-	0 ra-	0 vi-	1 llo-	0 so
S1	2	0 mi-	1 ra-	0 gre	0 vos	0 con-	0 ta-	1 rey,	
S1	3	9 que	1 fez,	9 e	9 mui	0 pi-	0 a-	1 do-	0 so,
S1	4	9 a	1 Ma-	0 dre	9 do	1 al-	0 to	1 Rei	
S1	5	9 por	0 un	1 cre-	0 ri-	0 go	9 que	1 fo-	0 ran
S1	6	9 a	1 furt'	1 e-	0 re-	0 ges	0 pren-	1 der	
S1	7	1 por-	0 que	9 de	1 San-	0 ta	0 Ma-	1 ri-	0 a
S1	8	1 semp'r	1 y-	0 a	0 lo-	1 or	0 di-	1 zer.	

S2	1	1 Poi-	0 lo	0 ou-	1 ve-	0 ron	0 fi-	1 lla-	0 do
S2	2	0 qui-	1 sér-	0 an-	0 o	9 y	0 ma-	1 tar;	
S2	3	9 mais,	1 po-	0 lo	0 fa-	1 zer	0 pe-	1 na-	0 do
S2	4	0 vi-	1 ver,	1 fo-	0 ron-	0 lle	0 ta-	1 llar	
S2	5	0 a	1 lin-	0 gua	9 ben	9 na	0 gar-	1 gan-	0 ta,
S2	6	0 cui-	1 dan-	0 do-	0 o	0 co-	0 fon-	1 der,	
S2	7	1 por-	0 que	1 nun-	0 ca	9 mais	9 da	1 Vir-	0 gen
S2	8	1 fo-	0 sse	0 lo-	1 or	0 com-	0 põ-	1 er.	

useful given that it rests on something that is clear and stable: the structure of the text in terms of its line lengths and rhyme types. If we have a text, say, like #156 that alternates eight-syllable *grave* lines with seven-syllable *agudo* ones, might it not be possible for some regular rhythm to emerge from their alternation (e.g. “A mad-Re do QUE de TER-ra / PRI-meir’ O-me FOI fa-ZER”)? This would clearly not be based on lexical stress, but on the numerical properties of the line in its context i.e. a seven-syllable *agudo* line might be parsed as 1 0 1 0 1 0 1 or 1 0 0 1 0 0 1 (or some other combination), depending on the length and rhyme type of the lines around it. We would therefore have - over and above the patterns of the individual words - an additional rhythmic frame determined by verse structure.

Such a frame - if it exists - would bring us back towards John Stevens's idea of number as the uniting force in medieval song: "In plain language, the musician did not set the words of the poem to music; he set its pattern. It was this pattern, a purely numerical structure of stanzas, lines and syllables, which preceded both the melody and the poem. The pattern had to be realized in two media - the medium of words and the medium of notes - and it did not matter in the least which was realized first" (Stevens, 1986, p. 499; note that "preceded" here is used in the sense of "took precedence" rather than "preceded chronologically"). It fits, in its numerical focus, with Stevens's differentiation based on comments from a number of medieval Latin theorists between *musica metrica* (songs measured in patterns resembling classical metrical feet e.g. rhythmic modes) and *musica ritmica* (songs measured only in terms of syllable count) - the *Cantigas* belonging to the latter category. Yet unless something concrete can be found to link it to, either in the texts or the melodies, its existence must remain conjectural. This is one of the major difficulties in studying text rhythm at various levels: finding rhythmic features whose presence can be demonstrated objectively and which can then be meaningfully linked to other aspects of the composition.<sup>22</sup> The text frame certainly functions as a point of intersection of words and music, but whether its influence could be extended to cover text rhythm is something that would need to be established.<sup>23</sup> If such a "verse rhythm" existed, how would it interact with the lexical stress patterns of the text (on the one hand) and the musical rhythm provided by the notated melody (on the other)? It is possible that both it and any layers of text rhythm below it, insofar as they can be shown to exist for the texts, would simply be over-written in the final piece by the rhythm of the melody i.e. that they might be present somewhere in the process of text composition, but do not come through the musical setting to the final song. We have already seen that the stress patterns of the text do not naturally contribute towards a regular rhythmic framework, so the possibility of there being multiple layers of rhythm, each existing as a distinct entity and being over-written by the next as we move through different stages of composition, is not perhaps as unlikely as it might at first sound.

This also brings us back to the question of the relationship between words and music in the *Cantigas*. The common assumption behind the ideas of Rossell and van der Werf - and other analyses of rhythm in the *Cantigas* - is that text rhythm and musical rhythm must be linked, which offers the consequent possibility that one might be used to clarify the other in case of doubt or ambiguity. But there are a number of complicating factors which suggest otherwise. Most notable among these are the instances of repeated melodic material, generated through the normal repetitions of the *virelai*, which appear with text lines of different rhythms over the course of a piece, despite being notated in exactly the same way.<sup>24</sup> This is certainly true for the first stanza of each piece i.e. the portion that is normally underlaid in the sources, but the evidence from manuscript *T* (which sometimes offers more than one underlaid stanza) suggests that it can be extended to cover the subsequent stanzas as well. To discard this evidence in favour of variable musical rhythm would mean assuming that the consistency of the notation in these repeated phrases is merely a graphical convention, behind which would lie an unwritten performance convention to vary the musical rhythm with the music of the text. A simpler (and more likely) explanation is that text and music are not linked in this way. Processes of contrafaction, melodic re-use and the possible use of pre-existing melodies from other sources are also problematic, as they challenge the idea of a close compositional relationship between words and music i.e. that this particular text and melody were created for each other, and that we can therefore expect to find features of one mirrored in the other. We must further be prepared to confront the possibility that textual and musical rhythms may each be following their own independent logic e.g. in the case of pieces, like #156 above, whose melodies follow regular rhythmic patterns of longs and shorts (or equivalent figures) like those of the rhythmic modes. As we have seen, the texts tend not to conform to such patterns, which can therefore often appear to be superimposed on the text with little regard to the coincidence of “long” figures and stressed syllables.

***Song and source - the role of the manuscripts***

What difference does it make to a medieval manuscript collection like the *Cantigas* that its contents are songs, rather than some other type of artistic or literary product? One of the ways we can approach this question is to say that song is a medium *designed to be* delivered orally and received aurally. It is not the only one, of course: at the time of the CSM, the same could potentially be said of some types of poetry and other non-musical texts. But by the last quarter of the thirteenth-century the movement had already begun away from older oral practices towards those more typical of literature culture, resulting in the emergence of “literature” i.e. texts that are meant to be read. That movement can make non-musical works harder to place within the spectrum of oral and literate practice, particularly since the dividing lines are not hard and fast, with some older techniques and stylistic gestures persisting into repertoires otherwise composed and disseminated through writing. Song, on the other hand, is still experienced in fundamentally the same way today i.e. aurally, even in fully literate societies like our own. The role of the written record is therefore different for song than for what we now call poetry (with the exception of genres such as performance poetry) - there is always a disjunct between the set of written cues for realising a song and the song itself, experienced in performance. The separation between content and written record inherent in song also allows us to look both backwards and forwards from the physical sources - backwards to uncover the creative processes that lie behind them, and forwards to allow these pieces a potential life beyond the manuscript, as circulating songs.

I would like to consider this point against two other lines of argument: the defence of the idea that the *Cantigas* are songs, and the view of the production processes behind the collection put forward by Stephen Parkinson and Deirdre Jackson in their recent article “Collection, composition and compilation in the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*” (Parkinson & Jackson, 2006). In this, they not only offer a detailed model of the processes by which miracle stories become *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, but do so against a clear and comprehensive understanding of the manuscripts and the issues that surround them (the different “editions” of the

collection and the way these are structured relative to the existing miracle collections they draw on). Parkinson and Jackson suggest three phases which take us from the source material (the narrative content of the *miragres*) right through to the manuscripts in their final form. The first of these is *collection*, defined as “the process of acquiring narrative or literary materials”; the second, *composition*, consists of “the process of production of narratives”; while the third, *compilation*, corresponds to “the assembly of the component narratives into the ordered and structured sequences found in the manuscripts”. Within this model, the composition phase is further broken down, with Parkinson and Jackson arguing against the existence of a single unified compositional process in favour of three separate ones “resulting in texts, music and miniatures respectively”. According to this model, the combination of the texts and music produced (along with the miniatures) is reserved for the final compilation phase i.e. it is not until this point that the two elements come into contact.

This model has many attractive features to commend it. Firstly - and very importantly - it gives due credit to the complexity of the processes involved, especially with regard to the construction of the manuscripts. Secondly, it makes clear the nature of the *Cantigas* as a grand project with an overall purpose (to create a collection of Marian pieces in honour of the Virgin - and through her Alfonso) and identifies different phases of activity in the production of the manuscripts as we have them today. The finished pieces they contain indicate that this is a repertory that has been created rather than collected, a fact reinforced by the almost total lack of evidence of any wider circulation (regardless of the sourcing of narrative content from elsewhere). Thirdly, it breaks down the assumption that each piece is the result of a single unified process of composition in which all three elements (words, music and pictures) represent different facets of the same object so that any one element can be used to gain information about the others. It seems clear, for example, that there is a separate compositional process behind the miniatures and that these often offer a parallel - rather than equivalent - version of the narrative they depict. This is something that is worth remembering, even in those cases where the miniatures are clearly based on or responding to the texts they accompany.

The latter assumption underlies the view of the *Cantigas* as a “medieval multimedia experience” which has enjoyed considerable popularity over the years (e.g. see Keller, 1987; Scarborough, 1995), based largely on the sumptuous nature of the manuscript sources. This has also given support to the idea that - however many hands were involved - the collection can be considered the product of a single mind, namely that of Alfonso (e.g. see Snow, 1979). Both these positions are simplifications of a much more complex reality, and as such can be misleading. The narrative content may indeed link text and pictures but, as we have seen, links between text and music are much harder to draw. Some of the previous discussion in this chapter has suggested that it is not helpful to regard text and music as facets of the same object - on the level of structure, never mind that of content. The second position is an over-extrapolation from the fact that with the *Cantigas* we are dealing with a project, whose ultimate purpose is the glorification of its patron. It may well be true at a macro level, in terms of general intention, but at a more grassroots level the signs of many hands seem clear: the volume of material, the overlapping layers of editing and so on. To regard these people as transparent risks masking their input, so it is a strength of the Parkinson-Jackson model that it gives due prominence to their contribution.

There are other areas, however, in which the model is more debatable. The main concern is a simple one: that it sells the creative effort behind the CSM short. To take miracle stories, possibly in other languages such as Latin and French, in prose or other verse forms, and to generate a body of strictly versified Galician-Portuguese versions from them is a substantial task. And that merely describes the production of *miragres* - the origins of the *loores* are much less clear. Furthermore, what has been created is not just a body of texts: we are talking here about a large corpus of fully worked-out, performable songs. The *Cantigas* are neither theoretical constructs nor decorative objects, so the effort needed to do this would have been considerable - particularly if the combination of words and music was postponed to such a late stage of production as Parkinson and Jackson suggest. However, insights into song production gained by musicologists working with oral traditions and notationless cultures seem to suggest it is more likely for words and music to have been combined earlier, perhaps even before any stage of writing down. This is after

all the presumption with which we approach other medieval secular song repertoires such as the output of the Occitan troubadour tradition (although theirs reaches back some distance before the creation of the *Cantigas*). Might it therefore be legitimate to question whether we might be looking for some kind of *song creation process* - in terms of practices rather than content - as opposed to separate text and music creation processes which are then combined? The miniatures, in this respect, would be an added extra, tied as they are to the physical sources and limited to one incarnation of the collection (the two-volume set *T/F*).

With many issues surrounding the manuscripts yet to be fully elucidated, it is perhaps natural to focus on the trajectory of their production. However, it may well be worth drawing a distinction - or trying to - between composition and compilation phases i.e. between the creative processes of content and vessel. This is worthwhile because it opens the door to creative possibilities that lie outside the frame of reference of the extant sources: it also gets us beyond the monumentalism inherent in the *Cantigas* project, so clearly reflected in the manuscripts. We have so little evidence of the practical circumstances surrounding the production of these pieces, however, that this is an area that is bound to remain open to debate. We know a certain amount about the copying of the manuscripts, such as we can deduce from the physical evidence. But there remain questions as to whether there are other stages of production hiding behind what survives - missing exemplars or rough copies from which the manuscripts might have been assembled, for example. We should also remember that the processes of writing down and copying were not neutral at this time; their potential impact on the transmission of the CSM has yet to be evaluated.

The above discussion adopts a broad view of what constitutes “creation” or “creative process”, as opposed to adaptation, translation or some other way of describing the transformation of content. If we insist that creation has to mean “newly created, from scratch” then for one of the elements - music - there may, in some cases, be no creation process at all. (This is if we are entitled to extrapolate from the links between the *Cantigas* and other medieval musical repertoires



indicating the presence of borrowed melodies in the collection). This may not be a problem, however. Evidence from the medieval period suggests that the effort involved in creating a song, whether the melody was newly composed or borrowed from elsewhere, was genuinely appreciated i.e. that contrafacts were no less valued in creative terms. We are talking about a time when people were probably closer to the practices and patterns of traditional and folk repertoires, where the attitudes to musical property and what constitutes a musical text are quite different, than to the formality and intellectual property of Western art music. Nor would there necessarily be any contradictions in this respect with the *Cantigas* being the product of a courtly or learned setting: other repertoires suggest that these are compositional practices that potentially would have spanned all sectors of society (Rossell, 1996).

Returning to Parkinson and Jackson's model, it has to be acknowledged that it may not be possible to draw clear distinctions between processes of compilation and composition in the collection. Martha Schaffer (1995, 1997, 2000) is right to point out that the CSM are subject to "active editing processes" which in some cases result in composition or recomposition. However, it is still hard to ascribe the creation of such a large repertoire in a strictly defined "house style" entirely to a team of assemblers working on the manuscripts. Could it be more likely to have involved a team of expert "song practitioners", creators and compilers, with some capabilities shared across both tasks? This would enable those charged with the writing down of the collection to police the material passing through their hands for errors and inconsistencies, accounting for the editing visible in the sources, while relieving them of the entire burden of creation as well as copying.

So far we have been looking backwards from the manuscripts, but what can we see looking forwards? Treating the *Cantigas* as songs allows us to exploit the gap between content and written record noted above. To put it simply, a song implies a performance which implies an audience, inviting us to ask who that audience might have been and what the experience might have been like. It is important to note that what matters here is *performability* rather than actual performance: whether a song has ever actually been performed is immaterial, provided that it can be. This

is helpful in a *Cantigas* context since we have next to no information to indicate that they had any life beyond the manuscripts. Some commentators, like Elvira Fidalgo (2002), have nonetheless begun to speculate that they may have had some very reduced form of circulation, possibly never breaching the bounds of Alfonso's court. She does so on the basis of the references in the *Cantigas* texts to the *miragres* being delivered orally: we may not want to take these entirely at face value (further discussion on this point follows below), but granting the CSM the status of song provides some reinforcement in this direction, over and above the content of the texts. Martha Schaffer (1999, pp. 141-142) meanwhile acknowledges the gap between what appears in the manuscript and the experience itself, although she relates the inclusion of the music more to the status of the *Cantigas* as a "book" rather than as a natural (if not always possible, for reasons of time, money and expertise) presentation for a collection of songs.<sup>25</sup> There also remain questions around the choice of the *miragre* as a genre for the bulk of the collection. While the *Cantigas* draw heavily on written miracle collections (as is clearly identified by Parkinson and Jackson), perhaps pointing up their learned origins, we should remember that miracle stories were a genre aimed at attracting the attention of a lay public and may well have circulated orally in addition to the written transmission evident from their sources. Alfonso and his compilers may therefore have picked a genre - the *miragre* - and a medium - song - which imply future dissemination, however limited.

One consequence of this re-orientation around song is that there is less room in the new compositional model for the miniatures. As has already been noted, their transmission depends on contact with the relevant manuscripts - this is not to decry their contribution, both as an alternative narrative and in making *T/F* (and to a lesser extent *E*) the imposing artifact that it is. But the fact remains that their potential routes of transmission are greatly limited compared with texts and melodies, both of which are capable of circulating independently even if there is scant evidence for the *Cantigas* of them actually doing so. Most commentators acknowledge that the "threefold impact" of the CSM would have been available only to a few. If we accept that, looking instead for the "twofold impact" (at most) of song, then the experience becomes easier to understand. What would the ideal

experience of the *Cantigas* have been like? Listening to a story expressed through song, admiring the artistry of words and melody and the skill of the performer. Contrast this with Connie Scarborough's (1995) attempt to recreate the supposed "multimedia experience" in modern terms, which would involve listening to renditions of one or more pieces while reading a printed edition of the texts and consulting a facsimile of the miniatures, thus reuniting all the possible elements. I would argue that this is as misleading a model as those which refer only to the content of the texts. As songs, the ideal modern experience of the *Cantigas* is not so very different from the ideal medieval one: the passage of time may have made it harder to find suitable conditions (an audience capable of following the texts, for example) but the basic characteristics remain the same.

### ***Reception and performance - a "notional" public***

The main difficulty we encounter in investigating the reception of the CSM by their contemporaries is the paucity of evidence for either their performance or circulation, even by medieval standards. As we have already seen, evidence of circulation is confined to a single *loor* found in one of the other manuscripts of the secular Galician-Portuguese lyric (Pellegrini, 1977). As far as performance is concerned, Alfonso's second will does contain a stipulation that the *Cantigas* should be performed on feast days of the Virgin (Schaffer, 1995, p. 79). But it is not clear to which pieces this clause actually refers i.e. whether it applies outside the small subset of pieces for feast days (*festas*) of the Virgin found at the end of the collection. We also have no supporting evidence to indicate that such performances ever took place, beyond a couple of marginal comments found beneath two of the *festas* pieces in *To* which have been interpreted by Martha Schaffer (1995, p. 79) as specifying "the act of performance". The first of these, on fol. 144r, reads "a uigia d sancta maria dagosto. seia dita Des quando deus sa madr aos ceos leuou / e no dia seia dita a procisson Beñita es maria filla madr e criada"<sup>26</sup>. While Schaffer is undoubtedly right to regard the form of words "*seia dita*" < *DIZER* "to speak" as implying song rather than recitation (p. 69), this comment does little more than specify the order in which the compositions mentioned should be performed. The

other, on fol. 145v, is even less explicit, simply announcing which piece is to follow the one below which it appears (“pois desta deue seer / A do batesmo / Aver non poderia lagrimas que chorasse”).

What we are left with, then, are the four large and rather ornamental manuscripts, including the “deluxe” two-volume set *T/F* with the miniatures. These certainly do fulfil one of the main aims behind the collection - to form a fitting monument to Alfonso - which sits alongside its avowed religious purpose of honouring the Virgin. The *Cantigas* would have succeeded in cementing his reputation as a patron of the arts and learning, something that has to be taken into account when studying the manuscripts. But this approach is less helpful in dealing with their contents, when we need to get behind the monumental aspect and the manuscripts themselves in order to find out what the collection is all about. The lack of wider supporting evidence is a problem, but approaching the collection from the standpoint of performance - taking the pieces we have and asking what effect they might have had on those who heard them - allows us to access aims and motivations that may have become obscured (even if such attempts necessarily involve a degree of speculation and/or reconstruction).<sup>27</sup> We can then use the insights gained to round out our existing perspectives.

From the point of view of performance, then, the texts themselves provide us with a limited amount of information about their explicit motivations. The narrative *miragres* usually start with an exordium - a stanza or so setting up the piece - before embarking on the story proper. It is in these exordia that any statements regarding the motivations of a piece are normally to be found. Examples from four pieces are given below (all first stanza unless otherwise stated):

#188

Desto ela un miragre  
mostrou, que vos eu direi,  
a que fix bon son e cobras,  
porque me dele paguei;  
e des que [o] ben ouverdes  
oido, de certo sei  
que averedes na Virgen  
poren mui mais a fiar.

#198

Dest' aveo en Terena  
un miragre mui fremoso  
que mostrou Santa Maria,  
e d' oyr mui saboroso;  
e poi-lo oyren, creo  
que por mui maravilloso  
o terrán, e que metudo  
dev' a seer ontr' os preçados.

#258

[E] de tal razon com' esta  
un miragre vos direi  
que mostrou Santa Maria  
en Proença, com' achei  
escrito ontr' outros muitos,  
e assi [o] contarei  
que, se o ben ascuitardes,  
fará-vos muit' alegrar.

#249

second half, stanza three  
[referring to a stone mason working on church at Castroxeriz]

E porend' or' ascoitade  
o que ll' avêo enton,  
e senpr' averedes ende  
que falar e departir.

The exordia take the form of a direct address from narrator to audience - something which immediately places the piece in the context of performance. We may be given details as to the place or origins of the miracle (including miracles taken from written sources - see #258, lines 4-5), and claims may be made regarding the credibility of the story (“I heard it from reliable witnesses” etc.), and about the effects or efficacy of the overall performance. In the latter, the narrator often stresses both the utility *and* entertainment value of his tale. So alongside claims that listening to the miracle will bolster our faith (e.g. #188, lines 5-8) or offer some useful life lesson, we find references to the enjoyment that might be had in the process: words like *pagar* “to please” (#188, line 4), *alegrar* “to cheer” (#258, line 8) or *sabor* “pleasure” (#198, line 4).<sup>28</sup> #198 promises to leave its audience wondering at its marvellous tale of great worth (lines 5-8),<sup>29</sup> while the

plight of the stone mason depicted in #249 will - it is claimed - provide a talking point that will last long after the story is finished (lines 7-8). It is important to note that there is no obvious conflict between these different claims. Religious and secular objectives run side by side, with entertainment no obstacle in expressing devotion to the Virgin. The enjoyment comes in the form of an experience that is passed on from performer to listeners, as we can see from the first four lines of #188: “Desto ela un miragre / mostrou, que eu vos direi / a que fix bon son e cobras / porque me dele paguei”. Whatever the original source of the miracle, it has been transformed into song and is being presented to an audience as an enjoyable experience which the narrator wants to share.

So why not take these statements at face value? Firstly, the stereotyped nature of these addresses - in both form and content - casts doubt on their value as documentary evidence. Furthermore, in the context of the *Cantigas* with their strictly metrical texts and rhyme schemes we do need to be cautious when dealing with words occurring in rhyme positions (although this is less of an issue for “easy” rhymes such as the infinitive ending -AR). It may be best to look on these more as indicators that the *Cantigas* are related to traditions that either incorporate performance or have done so at some stage in their development, rather than as direct indicators of performance itself. It is possible, for example, that the exordia represent the fossilized remains of an older, more “live” performance tradition. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to discount their testimony entirely. The texts do tell us at least that the relationship with performing traditions is there, and suggest that entertainment should be included on any list of potential motivations.

Similar comments could be made with regard to genre and form. It has been argued that miracle stories as a genre have closer links with popular culture than some of the other literary genres of their day, i.e. that they belong with other genres that grew out of the need for parish priests to be able to communicate religious ideas and doctrines to their flock, in ways that the latter could understand. Aron Gurevich (1988, p. 2) sums this up succinctly:

For this reason, these works could not help but reflect certain significant aspects of folk-religiosity and the popular world-view. Preachers, who strove to penetrate the mind of each listener, could achieve this only by adapting to their audiences. They did so by speaking in a comprehensible and simple language, resorting to familiar images, confining themselves to subjects within the mental horizon of the flock, referring to folklore and even making use of the stylistic features of tale and song.

So works in these genres can reflect the same imperatives that drive popular culture: keeping the language and ideas simple so as to be understood, and, where possible, exploiting other successful methods of communication such as story and song. In these terms, the rather basic characterization found in the *Cantigas* (which offers us types rather than individuals), the almost complete lack of symbolic imagery and the focus on simple practical morality (rather than complex or abstract questions) make perfect sense. If the use of song was an accepted tactic for the communication of religious ideas to a lay audience, then this goes some way to explaining the peaceful co-existence of entertainment and didactic purpose. It has also been suggested that the *virelai* form itself may have been associated by contemporaries with popular or “low” culture; hence, paradoxically, its use in religious lyric such as the *Cantigas* and the Italian *laude*, where the audience and aims were less exalted than in the “high art” of the day.<sup>30</sup> We need to remember here that the *Cantigas* do come from a courtly context rather than a popular one: and this is a created repertory, not one that emerges out of popular tradition. But they also come from a time when the boundaries between “high” and “low” culture may not have been as marked as they have perhaps since become - at least for those in the upper layers of medieval culture, who would have had access to the layers below them.<sup>31</sup> It should therefore come as no surprise to find elements of popular culture in courtly repertories such as the *Cantigas*, nor that these should be elements associated with effective communication and entertainment.<sup>32</sup>

The strongest evidence of the *Cantigas*’ intended - if not actual - performance, however, is the presence of music itself. Their status as songs is important because it positions them as texts to be *heard* rather than texts to be *read* - something that is all too easily lost when our primary encounter is with the text in written form.<sup>33</sup> As texts intended for aural consumption in public they offer a very different experience to written, literary texts<sup>34</sup>. As Mark Booth (1981, p. 7) puts it:

The existence of songs in sound, in time, is the simplest distinction between them and written verse. Song words are given only once in a performance and then are gone, carried along by the music and succeeded implacably by the next words, which claim attention in their turn.

The audience of a song cannot scan back and forth in the text, whether to unearth hidden allusions or check details that may have been missed the first time around: this forms one of the major differences between song and poetry. A song text, therefore, needs to be reasonably clear and easy to follow so that its audience does not get lost. Subsequent hearings can provide an opportunity to fill in gaps, but may not be guaranteed (or expected). The bulk of the *Cantigas* texts are narratives: in order for them to achieve their aims the essential details of each tale must be successfully delivered to those listening. At the same time, the performance must appeal to the audience to keep them paying attention. The stories of the *Cantigas* are full of colour - priests who have close encounters with hairy spiders (#222 and #225), a missing piece of meat that makes its presence known by banging around inside the box where it has been hidden (#159), the grotesque deformations visited on clerics who have been foolish enough to steal from the Virgin (#318 and #327), bees who fashion a miniature chapel complete with altar and images of the Virgin and Child after a stolen host is hidden in their hive (#208), and even a talking sheep (#147). The appeal of a good narrative, in catching the audience's interest and keeping them interested, should not be underestimated.

Bearing all this in mind, other features of the *Cantigas* texts come into new relief. The role of the refrain - whose presence between the stanzas has sometimes been questioned<sup>35</sup> - becomes clearer. Refrains in the *Cantigas* tend to encapsulate the "moral of the story": that of #354 (which tells the story of King Alfonso's pet weasel, which escapes from its box one day and is trodden on by a horse but miraculously emerges unscathed) speaks of the Virgin being there for both the big and the little things in life ("Eno pouco e no muito, / en todo lles faz mercee / aos seus servos a Virgen, / Madre do que todo vee"). The added dimension of music ensures that the refrain functions as a powerful aural reference point, while its textual recurrences as part of the *virelai* structure help to drive the point of the piece home. The repetitions not only offer a handy summary for anyone who may



have got lost along the way, but also provide a certain amount of “thinking time” - for both performer to regroup and listeners to digest the stanza they have just heard - thus helping to pace the narrative. Having a story delivered in this way, via a strophic musical structure, is an engaging experience: the audience must wait for the performer to deliver each new development, creating a sense of expectation (“what will happen next?”). This engagement is reinforced by the use of the first person in the texts. Judson Boyce Allen (1984, p. 215) has noted that

... certain kinds of statements which include the first person pronoun may be validly made by anyone, not because they are true statements about any possible world or situation, but because they are the kind of true statements because of which any given speaker, by attaching himself to them, becomes himself true.

In other words, the use of the first person not only reinforces the persona of the story-teller but encourages the audience to project themselves into the role of the performer. This is an effect more commonly associated with lyric than narrative, but it is found in both (Booth: “If we find the song appealing, we adopt the story and tell it along with the singer” [1981, p. 15]). A successful performance thus harnesses audience involvement to create an experience that is far more participatory than has sometimes been allowed for in discussion of medieval song texts.

This potential for participation can be further extended to the unfolding of the texts themselves. It has been suggested that the need for clarity of expression produces a certain degree of redundancy in song texts, which tend to carry less information than non-musical poetic texts intended for reading.<sup>36</sup> This is also a feature found in the *Cantigas*. Their texts are certainly not formulaic in the sense of being “oral-formulaic”, but their audience would soon have picked up a vocabulary of recurring words and phrases - filler phrases and other short combinations that come round regularly. (We have already seen some examples of these in Chapter 1). What this produces for an audience is the ability to sense what is likely to be coming next - an effect increased by the predictive qualities of metre, rhyme and any other poetic devices deployed, such as parallelism. Far from being artificial, passive or external, the shape created by the metrical structure

and rhyme scheme becomes something live and functional, which the audience are continually engaging with and responding to as they listen to the song.<sup>37</sup>

The strictness of the metrical structures and rhyme schemes found in the *Cantigas* - where repetition of rhyme words or sounds is avoided, even over the course of very long pieces - means that their texts provide an impressive display of virtuosity as they strive to meet the demands of the versification.<sup>38</sup> Whether it is through short-line structures, difficult rhymes, unorthodox rhyme solutions such as coinages, or details tossed in at the last minute to provide additional rhymes, there is plenty of skill here for an audience to enjoy. For example, #069 (“Santa Maria os enfermos sãa”) tells of a deaf-mute who, having been healed, will now be able to say something other than “ãa”. Stephen Parkinson (1999, p. 22) sums up the challenge represented by the structures of the *Cantigas* texts as follows:

The CSM show many examples of versification, and more particularly of the use of rhyme, which can be classified as virtuosic. The skill consists in carrying through a technically demanding plan, a type of challenge which calls to mind the ratings or degree of difficulty used in competitive diving, or the marking of technical merit in figure skating.

The thrill of watching the performer “walking his/her tightrope” (will he/she be able to keep control of his/her structures? will he/she run out of rhymes?) would surely have engaged and entertained a medieval audience, just as it does for us today. But it does imply an audience capable of appreciating the skill and inventiveness involved in the performance. This need not necessarily have involved specialized expertise on his/her part (the virtuosity on display here is often easily appreciable), though it does indicate a liking for the kind of challenge presented by the combination of metrical and rhyme structures.

To make sense of all this, the *Cantigas* would have needed an audience to entertain - and one “educated” enough to appreciate the skill on display. Their public may have been “notional” in the sense that we have no direct evidence of it, but it surely existed. Song, unlike reading, is a public event. When performed, the song becomes the property of both performer and audience, something that is experienced together, in the moment as it unfolds. Taken alongside the other

indicators - form, genre, use of first person etc. - as well as the limited statements about performance in the texts, virtuosity in the *Cantigas* provides a valuable pointer to the kind of experience the collection might have offered a contemporary audience. This in turn enables us to adjust our perspective to accommodate motivations such as entertainment, clear and accessible communication (of religious message) and display of skills, which may help us to better understand its contents, but can often be overlooked in favour of more overtly monumental or devotional ones. Status as song is crucial to this process: it is what allows us to extend the picture beyond the manuscripts and the limitations of the supporting evidence.

## Notes

1. Typical are comments such as those of Keller ("With melody each poem becomes a song. Melody would greatly increase their impact" [1987, p. 15]), which acknowledge the issue but fail to follow it up with any discussion.
2. For convenience I will occasionally use the term "underlaid" when referring to the text of the stanzas that have music in the manuscripts; however, it would be more accurate to describe these as "overlaid".
3. See Parkinson (1987) for detailed discussion of both these pieces and others.
4. I have not shown the notation here, but it proceeds predominantly in alternating long and short notes - this too is effectively the "default" setting for notation in this repertory.
5. Existing work which does attempt to offer insights into compositional technique has often been limited by its choice of perspective. Antoni Rossell (1998), for example, describes the functioning of small cellular elements and similarities of contour in the make-up of the CSM melodies, but does not link this to anything happening in the texts or the manuscripts.
6. This survives in a fourteenth-century copy and is thought to postdate the repertories it describes, including the *Cantigas*. See d'Heur (1975).
7. The *Arte de trovar* lists three ways in which a *seguir* can be constructed, in ascending order of difficulty: 1) by adopting the melody of its model only; 2) by adopting both melody and rhyme sounds of the model; 3) by paraphrasing the textual content of the model or by setting pieces of its text within the *seguir* so that they are given a new meaning.

8. The division of the fifteen-syllable lines is also inconsistent in the manuscript, with everything from a 10/5 to a 6/9 split - though this appears to have more to do with the physical space available.
  
9. Ferreira (1993, p. 601) also points out that Franconian notation was not formalized in writing before 1280: "By that time the notational system of the Escorial codices had already been in use for a decade; it cannot have been dependent on a code that either had not yet been invented or was just being formulated".
  
10. Anglés (1958, p.120) asserts that the *Cantigas* copyists were not only careful in their work but were also skilled and fully aware of how to use the notation in which they were writing. Many commentators have pointed out that there are anomalies in the notation of the Escorial manuscripts which render Anglés's description of the Cantigas notation as "perfectísima" (1958, p.144) vulnerable to attack. At least one (Llorens Cisteró, 1987, p. 215) has queried the systematic nature of the notation contained in these sources, seeing instead a lack of system. However, many of these (e.g. van der Werf, 1987) fail to get beyond the initial point of comparison with the other medieval notational systems e.g. that the *Cantigas* notation is not purely Franconian in nature.
  
11. For a clear and coherent summary of the debate surrounding the rhythm of the Cantigas see Llorens Cisteró (1987). This is a useful reference point considering the complicated and convoluted nature of the topic and is particularly valuable for placing Anglés in the context of the prevailing theories of his time, the consequences of his ideas and general reaction to them.
  
12. "More quoque Davitico etiam ad preconium Virginis gloriose multas et perpulchras composuit cantilenas, sonis convenientibus et proportionibus musicis modulatas" quoted in Anglés (1958, p. 134). The reference to "musical proportions" may refer to rhythm, as assumed by Anglés and others (e.g. Llorens Cisteró, 1987). However, it may simply refer to the intervals of the melody.
  
13. For details, see the project's website at <http://cesem.fcsh.unl.pt/investigacao/linhas-de-investigacao/estudos-musica-antiga/proyectos-financiados/confluencias-culturais-na-musica-de-alfonso-x>.
  
14. Martin Cunningham's (2000) performing edition is an exception in this regard, offering an extensive discussion of the notational background to his fully-realized rhythmic versions - based on "[fixing] *neither* the mensural value of the ligatures *nor* the expectation of strict modal rhythm ... [but] instead the ternary group or *perfection*, to which the other elements of the notation must accommodate themselves" (p. 57, emphases in original). The results of his transcriptions are, however, unconvincing. A more recent performing edition by Chris Elmes (2004-) offers simpler transcriptions but is largely centred round *E* - and makes no claims to offer a critical edition of the melodies.
  
15. This is a remark which reflects Stevens's view of dance-song in general as a social phenomenon and therefore a metrically regular one ("they might be assumed to have the regular, recurrent beat for a company to keep step or sing together" [1990, p. 396]).
  
16. "Anglés (1958: 395) afirmaba que métrica e ritmo non son interdependentes. Isto obrigárialo a cambiar de ritmo non só en cada estrofa, senón en cada verso. Este camino levaba irremediabilmente a unha transcripción en "ritmo libre" ou prosódico-textual que Ugo Sesini xa propuxera no ano 1939" (Rossell 1996, p. 45).

17. van der Werf describes the troubadour repertory as being “disseminated primarily in oral tradition” but places the *Cantigas* as being “clearly copied - directly or indirectly - from a single set of exemplars” (1987, pp. 229-230).
  
18. This is not to say regular rhythmic patterns are not found in the *Cantigas*, only that they may not conform to the full horizon of expectations implied by these features in later repertories.
  
19. We have already seen in Ch.1 how the content part of the adverb can be split off to form a rhyme.
  
20. The category of semi-stressed syllable was suggested by consideration of a point raised by Celso Cunha (1961) in the course of examining elision in the works of two Galician-Portuguese troubadours. He had noticed that in some elisions one of the two unstressed vowels seemed to behave more like a strong vowel, although he stopped short of describing it as stressed, labelling it instead “semiforte, subforte, subtônica” and linking the phenomenon to the “ritmo do enunciado verso a que pertence” (1961, p. 37). He had earlier noted (p. 30) that the stress value of certain monosyllables (e.g. *e*, *que*, *ca*, and *se*) was not entirely clear for medieval Galician-Portuguese.
  
21. The system used for recording stress patterns is similar to that used by Martin Duffell (1994), although here stress is defined in the first instance as lexical stress rather than verse rhythm.
  
22. For example, Fernandez de la Cuesta (1987b) attempts to produce an integrated analysis of *Cantiga* 76 which seeks to compare the prosodic and melodic accentual patterns with an assumed regular rhythmic ictus stemming from the line of verse. The assumption of the rhythmic ictus is a debatable step, as are some of his conclusions regarding the link between the different types of accent and the means of defining them. He also assumes a principle of “first stanza composition” i.e. that “el compositor realiza el dibujo melódico sobre la configuración acentual o prosódica de las palabras del estribillo y primera estrofa” (1987b, p.164).
  
23. Note that while Guthrie (1991) finds “verse rhythms” of this type emerging from samples of a variety of medieval French and English works (though centred on those of Machaut and Chaucer), he does so in a very different metrical context. It makes far more sense to discuss this in the context of the French *octosyllable* or *decasyllable* - recognised line types within that tradition, used across the work of many poets - than it does in the highly varied metrical environment of the *Cantigas*. As the example from #156 suggests, it is hard to argue that there is a consistent “eight-syllable *grave/agudo* line” in the *Cantigas* - the variety we see there is typical of what we find in extending the comparison to cover all the eight-syllable lines in the collection, and a similar picture emerges for other line lengths.
  
24. Duffell (1994, p. 200) unwittingly provides an illustration by citing two lines from *Cantiga* 54 whose stress patterns differ; the musical setting, however, is identical in both cases.
  
25. “¿Por qué motivo se copia la música con el texto? Creo que Alfonso manda copiar la música porque corresponde con sus ideas sobre el poder del libro: la música se incluye para que el «lector» del código comprenda el texto de la misma manera en que el «oyente» de una cantigas lo comprende. En otras palabras, la música se considera una parte esencial de la composición” (Schaffer, 1999, p. 141); “... para el individuo que quiere reproducir la açafeha o cantar una composición, Alfonso lo posibilita... una cantiga no consta solamente

de palabras, sino que es un fenómeno o evento auditivo: no se puede reproducir el *son*, pero se puede *figurar* la manera de cantar *cobras e son*" (p. 142).

26. Both this comment and the following one are quoted from Schaffer (1995, p. 69).

27. The manuscripts of the *Cantigas*, like those of many other song collections from the period, contain a single line of melody with underlaid text (normally just the refrain and opening stanza). They do not give any further directions for performance such as tempo, expressive markings or accompaniment. We should remember that the manuscripts of medieval secular song repertoires are not prescriptive in the way that modern musical scores purport to be, nor fixative in the manner of recordings. Nor should we assume that an audience would necessarily have heard a piece only once, although it would clearly have been important for new material to make a strong impression (see later discussion).

28. Tinnell (1981) notes similar use in Spanish medieval texts of words such as *solaz*, *solazar* and *solacia* in describing "the effects produced by a good *juglar*" (p. 191).

29. "Marvellous" is used here in the sense of "miraculous" or "amazing". See Brea (1993) for a discussion of the terms *maravilla* and *milagro* in the medieval period and in the *Cantigas*.

30. For example, see Diehl (1985, p. 96). "It is evident that variants of the *virelai* or *zejel* refrain form smacked unmistakably to contemporaries of the popular and the "low". That is why in several traditions the form is used earlier and more freely in religious than in secular lyric, which had higher artistic goals in those texts deemed worthy of recording in the *chansonniers* of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. When there is record that the Tripudiatu danced in Italian streets and pilgrims danced at pilgrimage churches, what wonder that religious songs meant for the people took on the shape of their dances?"

31. See the discussion of Redfield's model of asymmetrical access in Burke (1994, p. 23).

32. It has long been suggested that folk repertoires may offer a more relevant point of comparison for medieval songs in terms of both practices of composition and transmission and the experience they offer an audience, more so than the corresponding modern repertoires of art song and literature. This has been argued with regard to both music and texts. The following comment by Paul Zumthor is typical: "Medieval literature can be more aptly compared with folklore [...] than with modern literatures" (quoted in Edwards 1993, p. 27). Edwards himself goes on to state (p. 28): "... almost every aspect of medieval performance is susceptible to illumination from the world of present-day traditional music."

33. "... the *grand chant courtois* in particular and medieval lyric in general, is more sung than read, and can, therefore, never be properly considered without major emphasis on its existence as public behavior" (Boyce Allen 1984, p. 215).

34. See Boyce Allen (1984) for discussion of the ways in which the experience of the medieval lyric differs from that of modern poetry intended for private reading.

35. Cummins (1970) argues for the suppression of interstrophic refrains in the *Cantigas* on the grounds of the interruption they present in performance.

36. Booth (1981, p. 9): "Oral poetry has a relatively lower density of information per line than written poetry can have. The units are more familiar; or to put it another way,

they are larger: the audience recognizes phrases more often and is less often cued by the subtle responses to individual words.”

37. Boyce Allen (1984, p. 208) makes this internalizing and personalizing of form clear: “When the hearer displaces himself thus, what he experiences is the form of the poem [...] a serial experience of significant words, taken as one’s own utterance [...]”

38. See Parkinson (1999) for a list of the main devices and types of rhyme found in the collection.

### CHAPTER 3: WHAT MAKES A SONG? ISSUES OF TEXT-MUSIC RELATIONS

Jesús Montoya Martínez's 1998-99 edition of the subset of pieces related to Santa María del Puerto lays out its pieces in two different ways:

#371

*Tantos vay Santa María en-o seu Porto fazer  
de miragres que trobando non poss' os mēos dizer.*

Pero direi un daqueles que pouco temp' a que fez  
mui grande e mui fremoso esta Reÿna de prez  
en Barrameda, que éste mui' a preto de Xerez;  
e polo mellor saberdes oýde-mí-o a lezer:

#378

*Muito nos faz gran merçee  
Deus Padre, Nostro Sennor,  
u fez sa Madr' avogada  
e seu Fillo Salvador.*

Ca pois ela avogada  
é, e nossa razon ten,  
non pod' al fazer seu Fillo  
senon juygar-nos ben;  
poren destorvo do demo  
non-o tēemos en ren,  
macar s' él muito traballa  
de nós seer destorvador.

These two pieces have identical text structures (alternating eight and seven syllable unrhymed and rhymed hemistichs), yet are laid out differently. In his introduction, Montoya Martínez (1998-99, p. 126) explains the reasoning behind this:

De acuerdo con estas observaciones, he decidido presentar el CSMP [*Cancionero de Santa María del Puerto*] tal como convenía para una inteligencia musical, respetando el verso corto (octosílabo, por lo general), rimado o no rimado, acomodando el texto a la división de las frases musicales, tal como creo quisieron hacerlo los copistas, quienes tenían recursos para encastrar un texto en cuarenta líneas, pero que no acudieron a ellos, sino que lo escribieron con toda su extensión (cant. núm. 124). Con esta decisión creo que el lector actual comprenderá más fácilmente que cada línea



versual corresponde bien a una parte suspensiva, bien a una conclusiva, siempre que gocen de una cierta autonomía. No obstante acudiré al verso largo, cuando entienda que esta frase musical no se escucha como dividida, sino que es una frase larga.

In other words, the choice of layout is determined by the structure of the melody, as it can be divided into musical phrases. The division (given beneath each piece and incorporating a description of the melodic structure) has been realized by Gerardo Huseby, following the principles laid down in his earlier article, “Musical analysis and poetic structure in the *Cantigas de Santa María*” (Huseby, 1983), and continued in his later work, “El parámetro melódico en las *Cantigas de Santa María*: sistemas, estructuras, fórmulas y técnicas compositivos” (Huseby, 1999). Division into musical phrases depends on the occurrence of cadences (final or medial), the overall contour of the melodic phrase (a combination of parallel melodic material, shape and cadence) and any information that can be gleaned from the notation regarding rhythmic schemes and divisions, including those indicated by vertical lines in the underlaid portion of the manuscript.<sup>1</sup>

That this is an appropriate way to approach the question of musical structure is not in dispute: there may well be other smaller-scale aspects of musical structure present, such as recurrent motives or contours,<sup>2</sup> but the division into phrases is the one most likely to impact on our perception of the text - at least for the *Cantigas*. Rather, my question would be whether text structure should be subordinated to musical structure in this way. In his earlier article, Huseby (1983, p. 84) is quite clear about the reasons for doing so:

The question of verse length in the *Cantigas* can be answered by considering how the articulation created by the cadences and the continuity of the musical phrase define the line as an entity. It is my contention that verse length and musical phrase always coincide in this repertory, and that the musical structure of each piece is reflected in the verse division of the text in every case.

For Huseby, text structure and musical structure are inextricably linked when it comes to their division into phrases. From there it is a small step to the position taken by Montoya Martínez: text and music represent different facets of a single unitary structure - either can be used as a means of reading that structure, though the overall design may not be clear unless we consider both. In the case of #378

textual and musical phrase divisions appear to coincide. In #371 the musical phrases are longer than the textual phrases and thus accommodate two shorter phrases of text. Montoya Martínez's layout reflects this distinction, but at the expense of the identity of the two text structures. Whether it is right to sacrifice one structure in favour of another is a different matter, and depends on the idea that the two are linked in the way Huseby suggests. But are text and music really tied together in this way? Certainly, any edition has to decide how to structure the pieces it presents: Huseby's cadence-based approach to the melodies is not dissimilar to Walter Mettmann's rhyme-driven approach to the texts,<sup>3</sup> and there are plenty of cases in which the two coincide. However, #378 shows us that this is not always so - here melodic structure and metrical structure coincide, while the rhymes suggest a larger pattern. The presence of alternative and differently sized structures within a single text - never mind the melody - should alert us to the possibility that the structures found in the *Cantigas* might not be equivalent, but ones which co-exist, overlap and interact to produce the object that is experienced as "the piece as a whole". Serious "conflicts" are rare in the *Cantigas*, so that most of the time we are dealing with structures which fit inside each other, and usually in predictable ways: sometimes the melody can be contained within either metrical or rhyme structure of the text, sometimes it is the other way round. Because of the lack of conflict, there will be cases in which it is possible to use one structure - textual or musical - to read another, and the resultant reading may well make sense. Yet I remain uneasy about the extent to which text and music are here regarded as equivalent structures, as two facets of the same thing.

Justified or not in particular cases, the difficulty is in the wider implications this view entails, both for the *Cantigas* and beyond. It suggests that the relationship between textual and music structures is predictable, and can therefore be used with confidence to settle unresolved questions or ambiguities e.g. which structure should take priority to ensure a "correct" reading of the piece as a whole. I am uncomfortable with this degree of prescription: rather than privilege one structure or type of structure over another, I would prefer to adopt a model that can respect and accommodate all of them. If that means accepting that the connections between text and music may be looser than we have come to expect (or would

like), then that is simply the price we have to pay for a more realistic picture. Rather than a single “correct” reading, there may be several possible versions of a piece - textual and musical - depending on which structure or structures we choose to prioritise in any given context. All of these would be equally “correct”, though some might be more prominent than others e.g. if several structures coincide in their divisions. We find assumptions similar to the above underlying some of the attempts that have been made to connect the *Cantigas* with repertoires whose music has not survived, forcing scholars to speculate on the basis of text alone. This is most obvious in the attempts to trace the evolution of the musical structures found in the *Cantigas* from Arabic models, such as those by Wulstan and Beltrán.<sup>4</sup> The frustration of having a substantial number of texts but very little music, as is the case with the rest of the secular Galician-Portuguese lyric, also makes the Huseby/Montoya Martínez hypothesis attractive, offering the prospect of being able to say something, at least, about the missing music. When we know that we are dealing with a song repertoire rather than a collection of non-musical poetic texts, we would also like to be able to evaluate the effects of being set to music on the texts we do have. Looking further afield, the medieval practices of contrafaction and borrowing of melodic and textual structures, between pieces and across repertoires, mean that it would indeed be useful to have phrase division as a stable reference point, inherent and applicable to both text and music.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, this does not appear to be the case,<sup>6</sup> as the attempts that have been made to apply such principles consistently to the repertoires of medieval secular song - including the *Cantigas* - demonstrate.

Why should the relationship between text and music prove such a problematic area for scholars? Partly, because the points that depend upon it seem obvious, especially for medieval monophonic song. What we have in the surviving sources - text and melody, maybe rhythm - seems to represent song in its simplest form, without the complications added by instrumentation and all the other prescriptions of the modern printed score. Stripped of these distractions, we seem to have a clear line of sight through to the text-music relationship of the piece. The absence of unambiguous rhythmic indications, initially appearing as a problem - any analysis will have to be carried out with a major component missing - subsequently serves to

focus attention on the information that has survived: the structural divisions of the piece, and the correspondences between individual notes and note groups and the syllables of the text. John Stevens (1986, p. 497) has noted that discussion of the text-music relationship in vernacular song among medieval theorists (where it occurs) is largely structural in nature, so this is not an unreasonable approach to take. Where it can lead to problems is when it is over-extended, either in trying to conclude too much from what is ultimately one aspect of a piece (these structures occur within and contribute to the larger entity) or when trying to use the information gained in predictive ways beyond the limits of the piece concerned. As Wulf Arlt (1989, p. 66) has pointed out, there is not one text-musical relationship found in medieval song but many, with characteristics varying according to genre, repertory, date, region and the individual responsible. The precise details of the text-music relationship can vary from work to work, even within established traditions and repertories or among works by the same person. Contrast this with the stance taken by Leo Treitler (1992, p. 1), when he refers to a selection of medieval pieces as:

... representatives of a single large genre, the medieval lyric, with common musical and poetic properties and with similar relations between music and poetry. The same general analytical method is appropriate to them all. It is in the nature of the traditions they represent and of the analytical approach they provoke that they are best studied in such groups rather than as isolated individual works, as we shall see.

Treitler goes on to qualify his position with regard to individual pieces, stressing the need for all the different versions of a piece to be treated as valid, but not with regard to the overall integrity of the medieval lyric as a genre. But the category of “medieval monophonic song” itself perhaps needs to be re-examined. It is generally agreed that the contents of the written version do not represent the song in its entirety, as it would have been experienced in performance. Monophonic texture is in part a by-product of a transmission process that recorded only some of the information that has since become customary in the written transmission of art song; perhaps it would be more accurate to think of these songs as being transmitted with “no fixed accompaniment” - in the way that many folk songs circulate as melodies accompanying sets of words with the accompaniment left to the discretion of the performer. We also have to bear in mind that the body of

music that has come down to us does not represent the whole of medieval song. Only certain repertoires have survived, and these would have been created within a larger musical environment, the rest of which is now lost to us. It may make sense in some contexts to define “monophony” as a category (in opposition to polyphony, for example). But with an incomplete picture we should perhaps be warier of the categories we create - the risk of “lumping” is proportionally greater. This is a particular danger for the type of formal analysis historically popular in medieval studies, where the tendency to treat pieces in the reduced form of structural analyses may increase the impression of similarity. Nor is this the only difficulty associated with such an approach. As Margaret Switten (1999, p. 148) notes:

Structural analysis provides important insights, but it gives little sense of how a song plays out in time. Abstract schemes omit essential information and impose a deceptive normalisation. Emphasis on the stanza alone fails to take into account the repetition of stanzas that creates an irreversible temporal pattern. The unfolding *in time* of textual and musical elements is an issue that needs to be addressed.

The missing temporal dimension highlighted by Switten is another example of the gap that can arise between analyses of song and songs as they are experienced by an audience - or, at least, our best estimation of how they might have been experienced in historical periods or contexts removed from our own, such as the Middle Ages, where working from evidence that in the context of other (later) periods might seem partial or fragmentary is a frequent occurrence. Yet it is precisely the state of the information we have that makes such analysis - and comparative analysis - necessary. It is only by pooling the evidence from the surviving repertoires that common devices, techniques and practices begin to emerge: in this, Treitler is right to argue that they should be treated together. We need these insights - with all the caveats expressed above - in order to make sense of the songs that have come down to us. Wulf Arlt (1989, p. 61) gives a succinct assessment of the importance of analysis for the performance of medieval songs:

The performance of songs must begin with an analysis of what survives. This lays the foundation for “locating” the performance in a “context”, and for all the other necessary decisions, up to and including those concerning rhythm and the role of instruments. Two related questions need to be tackled first, one about the music-text relationship, and the other about the character of the surviving material, and in particular its position in the wide spectrum of possibilities ranging from an *ad hoc*

written version corresponding to a notationless practice or a notationless transmission at one extreme, to composition worked out in writing at the other.

This statement could equally well be turned round, however, to argue that analysis needs the focus of performance in order to remain relevant for the works it aims to shed light on. This would be true for any repertory that involves a performance component, but it is particularly so in the case of medieval repertories, where analysis is often called upon to compensate for contextual information that may not have come down to us, to clarify the relationships between traditionally problematic elements such as words and music (both these points apply to attempts to use text rhythms to clarify musical rhythm, for example), or simply to extract as much as possible from a small amount of surviving material. Gaining an understanding of performance in repertories whose practices are largely undocumented is not straightforward: information must be pieced together from a variety of sources including treatises relating to other repertories (for which a judgement must be made in terms of their distance in time, space and cultural context from the repertory in question), descriptions or statements about performance passed down from the works themselves (which may be refracted through literary or other artistic/cultural norms) or other sources such as miniatures of instrumentalists in manuscripts, whose function and value as documentary evidence must be also deduced from their surrounding context. Modern reconstructive performances can help to explore possibilities in areas that remain ambiguous, though the time gap and their experimental nature mean that the results must be treated with caution. Yet incomplete or hypothetical as that understanding may be, it is necessary if we are in turn to achieve a full and realistic picture of the work in its context.

For medieval song, analysis and performance are thus interdependent to an extent rarely found in later, better documented repertories. Both depend on an understanding not just of the artifacts themselves but of the musical and poetic practices they represent. This practical focus goes somewhat against the characteristics of analysis as it has been described by Lydia Goehr in her pioneering study *The imaginary museum of musical works*, and she is probably right to point out the philosophical contradictions that ultimately underlie this type of approach.<sup>7</sup>

Nevertheless, such balancing acts remain the only realistic way forward, as a pragmatic response to the situation presented by medieval texts.

Medieval song might well be considered as a field where analysis and performance meet and must be reconciled - on a practical level at least - if we are to make the most of what survives. Fundamental to this exercise are the two issues raised by Arlt above: the nature of the text-music relationship in the piece or repertory concerned, and the contextualising of the surviving evidence, which in the case of song involves positioning somewhere in the range of known medieval notational and compositional practices. The relationship between text and music (however we conceive it) is crucial to the analysis of medieval works, setting the parameters of the piece or repertory and establishing boundaries for further discussion of compositional process and interpretation of structures. Which elements of the piece are related, for instance, and which are not? Are we looking at different facets of a single structure, or separate structures existing alongside each other? How we answer such questions can have considerable impact on our perspective of the pieces at hand and on the way we approach them. To that end, this chapter will look beyond the simple equivalence of structures posited by Montoya Martínez and Huseby to consider wider questions of text-music relations, broadening its reach beyond the *Cantigas* to the field of song in general. By examining a range of different positions on how text and music function together in song I hope to evolve a clearer and better-founded starting position, on which subsequent discussion of how they might relate to each other in the CSM can be based.

### ***Studying song***

Montoya Martínez and Huseby attempt to define a “property” of the CSM as a repertory: that musical and textual divisions coincide to create an overall structure for the piece. Yet any appeal to the “properties” of song - even a repertory-specific one like this - can be fraught with difficulties. The fact that text and music do not appear to be in conflict does not necessarily mean that they can be conflated to a

single structure. There may be other ways of construing their relationship (that they are different kinds of structures, for example) which render the term “conflict” inappropriate. The structures may be functioning on different levels, or they may be complementing one another rather than combining.<sup>8</sup> This suggests that an exploration of the possibilities is at least worthwhile. Given the nature of the medieval evidence it makes sense to look beyond the *CSM* and similar repertories to see what insights can be gained from general accounts of song that take in later repertories. One further clarification is necessary: throughout the following discussion I will mostly be concerned with the practical side of how words and music relate to one another rather than with questions of meaning (which are problematic on both sides). The creation or performance of a song is itself a meaningful act, but the issues surrounding its meaning - as the product of two communication systems, music and language - are larger than can be dealt with here. I therefore intend to lay the question of meaning to one side as far as possible (recognizing that it can never be evaded altogether).

On turning to the wider literature, several problems become apparent. Firstly, there is the shortage of general writings on song, from which information regarding practices across a range of other repertories can be quickly gleaned.<sup>9</sup> Instead this information must often be extracted from repertory-specific accounts, with consequent problems of fragmentation and transferability (especially when comparing with medieval song). It may be objected that the breadth of the category - song in all its various forms, past and present - renders any general study unworkable. In his 1992 article “Theory and practice in the analysis of the nineteenth-century *Lied*”, Kofi Agawu acknowledges the difficulty but nevertheless defends the enterprise (1992, p. 3):

Theory-based analysis of song is notoriously lacking in models. The literature is dominated by individual “readings”. But the failure to construct explicit models does not necessarily reflect the genre’s resistance to theoretical definition. This is not to deny that the balance in disposition between words and music in song shifts at different moments in the history of European music - the songs of Zelter and Schubert, Schumann and Loewe, and Brahms and Wolf present marked contrasts in the relative weighting of words and music. Such differences, however, are more stylistic than structural, more concerned with individual composerly preference.



Picking factors that affect the text-music relationship out of the welter of particularities - individual pieces and repertoires - is not straightforward, as the different areas of song evolve their own principles and methods for treating the material they have at hand. As a result there is often a reluctance to look beyond the immediate needs of the field in question, which can leave underlying concepts unanalysed. The term “song” itself frequently appears as an unproblematic “back-stop” for detailed analysis - once it has been used there is no need to pursue the matter further. Yet the breadth of the category, encompassing so many possibilities, suggests we can do better than that. Some commentators, of course, are satisfied that the general issue of text-music relations has been resolved. See, for example, the following comments from Daniel Leech-Wilkinson (quoted in Agawu 1992, p. 30):

Argument over the relative importance of music and text in song is as ever-lasting as it is pointless. From Plato through Renaissance Humanism, the Reformation, the birth of opera, through Gluck and Wagner, musicians have argued with themselves and with authors about the duty of music to mirror the stresses and quantities of spoken text. Music history, as a result, has woven a drunken path back and forth between enforced recitation and more natural melodic exuberance as writers and musicians have exchanged the upper hand. The endlessly repeating arguments, which will continue as long as there remain articulate people unresponsive to music, are so much wasted energy; for *music always wins* [my italics]. As was well understood in the Middle Ages, music dominates whatever it accompanies, imposing its shape and character in a process which appears to be psychologically unavoidable. However it may be restrained by diktat, therefore, there follows inevitably a drift back towards a style in which musical rules determine musical details: the two cannot be separated in a meaningful way. But attitudes are generated by ideology, not art.<sup>10</sup>

As we shall see from the discussion to follow, there are contexts in which Leech-Wilkinson’s argument makes good sense (particularly with regard to medieval song). In others, however, it leaves key features unexplained or unexplored - if we seek to go beyond the “relative importance” of each element to look more critically at their relationship, for example. In these circumstances the argument that “music always wins” may not suffice.

Of the general accounts of song that are available, many in practice focus on the narrow range of repertoires that together could be described as “Western art song”, with a historical range that runs from the Renaissance through nineteenth-

century Lieder to those examples of twentieth-century art song that fit the category created.<sup>11</sup> In his survey for *Grove Music Online*, Geoffrey Chew (1980) is more open than most about his frame of reference and the reasons for adopting it: "... nearly all post-Renaissance song may be judged according to its fidelity to the declamation of the text and according to its expressiveness, and these criteria are not generally relevant to any other song repertoires".<sup>12</sup> Certain types of text-music relationship are thus preferred to others, according to how closely they conform with this "post-Renaissance" set of norms. For instance, the idea that the music should respond to the text can result in strophic songs being valued as less artistically complex than their through-composed counterparts, in spite of the persistence of strophic forms across most repertoires.<sup>13</sup> Mirroring developments in literature, a similar valuing of lyric over narrative forms can be discerned. In limiting the frame of reference, certain types of performance context are also enshrined along with the performing practices they represent: a relatively fixed version (or limited number of versions) of the piece, delivered faithfully in accordance with the written record, by a trained performer in a formal setting. The fact that there have always been repertoires that have fallen outside these criteria, even within the historical timeframe in question - popular or traditional song, say - is all too easily forgotten. Chew acknowledges that this standpoint struggles to accommodate repertoires that do not share the same preoccupations regarding text and music (eighteenth-century song and "20th-century experimental song" are cited as examples) and he admits that its criteria are "useless for judging medieval song".<sup>14</sup>

As a medieval strophic repertory comprising both narrative and lyric pieces, the *Cantigas* present particular difficulties for traditional academic accounts of song. Even if the "post-Renaissance" package of views is rejected as unsuitable, it is not at all clear what to put in its place. Fragmentation of attitudes and methodologies is even more marked across medieval repertoires than in the field as a whole, as scholars try to make sense of what can be widely differing evidence. The most striking example of this is the presence or absence of clearly defined rhythm, which has a substantial impact on how a given repertory is treated. From the structure and formula-based analyses of chant to the relatively free and text-centred

treatment of troubadour song (both unhampered by authoritative rhythmic indications) and the intricate formal analyses of motets and other polyphonic repertoires, “medieval song” can sometimes seem more like an umbrella concept. The issue of transmission weighs much heavier on medieval works than it does on later ones: the roles of creator, performer and intermediate transmitter may be divided differently, and can overlap. How much of the freedom already noted in the study of troubadour song is created by the phenomenon of *mouvance*? Meanwhile, medieval practices such as contrafaction challenge many of the conventions associated with later art song, even in pieces generally considered as representative of “high culture”. Song texts and melodies may be specially created for each other but existing melodies and texts can also circulate independently, available for other song creators to use, adapt or respond to as they see fit. In terms of attitude, this is much more reminiscent of the world of folk or traditional music than of the Western classical canon. Medieval narrative texts may behave as verse rather than poetry (i.e. a form of diction rather than a transcendental experience)<sup>15</sup> while the melodies may be little more than a vehicle for delivering the text. A setting may be carefully crafted to produce rhetorical interactions between text and music, or their sole link may be the physical dimensions of the line or stanza.<sup>16</sup> Catering for these varied possibilities requires the abandonment of many of the assumptions inherent in the “post-Renaissance” model.

Bearing all this in mind, we will now turn to the literature to see how the relationship between words and music has been described by different commentators, some working directly with medieval music, others with a more general theoretical focus.

### ***Models for song***

The marginalization of song *as song* in the literature speaks to a very real problem, namely, how to account for the syntax of a genre that includes two nominal semiotic systems, music and language. (Agawu, 1992, p. 3)

The issue of how words and music combine in song is a complex one. We have already seen that on a practical level their relationship can vary between different repertoires. Kofi Agawu accurately identifies a more fundamental question, however: how do two semiotic systems, music and language, relate to each other and combine to produce the entity we know as song? This issue underlies the kind of practical analyses with which we are already familiar i.e. those that examine the relationship as it presents itself in a particular piece, repertoire or sub-genre. Yet the position we adopt - explicitly or not - can have considerable impact on how we approach song on a more practical level.

It will have become clear from the preceding discussion that theoretical accounts of song are few and far between. The most comprehensive (and the most rigorous) is that provided by Agawu in the article quoted above. From the existing literature he identifies four basic models for the relationship of words and music:

1. Assimilation
2. Co-existence of elements in an irreducible relationship
3. Pyramid structure (words on top, music at base)
4. Confluence of independent overlapping systems

Under the first of these categories, I would also include accounts that are “fusionist” in nature (my term rather than Agawu’s) i.e. accounts that see song as a new entity created out of the fusion of text and music. The second is the broadest in practice, accommodating a range of viewpoints that stop short of the fusion described in model one. Category three - pyramid structure - attempts to some extent to utilize the differing capabilities of words and music but, Agawu suggests, perhaps says more about the ways in which academics have traditionally accessed song rather than about song itself. The fourth, Agawu’s preferred model, is the most intriguing but (as he admits) still problematic.

The most significant difference between these four models is the difference in emphasis on the larger-scale entity - the song - as opposed to its constituent

elements, words and music. I intend to examine their impact by discussing them in the context of various standpoints from the literature. Agawu's main focus may be the nineteenth-century *Lied*, but the points he identifies have implications for all song repertoires. I will seek to broaden out his account to include the additional issues raised by medieval song. I am not going to concern myself with the workings of either music or language *per se*: those are topics that are too large to tackle here. As a minimum, it should be remembered throughout the following discussion that the mechanisms by which language functions in human beings are still open to debate, as is the question of musical meaning.

### 1. *Assimilation and fusion*

The first category considered by Agawu sees the relationship between the components of song as an assimilation of one element by the other to create an entirely new entity, the song. Within the literature, this point has been most prominently made by Susanne Langer, who remarked in 1953 that:

When words and music come together in song, music swallows words; not only mere words and literal sentences, but even literary word-structures, poetry. Song is not a compromise between poetry and music, though the text taken by itself be a great poem; song is music. (p. 152)

Agawu rightly points out that Langer is here concerned with transformation of the linguistic element rather than its obliteration i.e. the transformation of "the entire verbal material, sound, meaning and all - into musical elements" (Langer, 1953, p. 150). The workings of the transformation process and the transformed material would still have to be addressed. Nevertheless, Langer's comments have been taken as indicating the dominance of music within the final song form, and criticised by those seeking to defend the relevance of linguistic characteristics or phenomena.<sup>17</sup> They are problematic in their implications (e.g. if the final product is essentially musical then it should be assessable on a musical basis) and in their implementation (how literary content is to be transformed into musical material). Both suggest a deprioritization of linguistic and literary features considered in their

pre-assimilation state, which may or may not accord with the experience of songs in performance. If these features survive through into the finished song in anything like their original form they must be accounted for: seeing the process as “assimilation” - rather than “incorporation” or some looser alternative - may unnecessarily limit the way in which they are treated by depriving us of useful analytical tools and insights from that previous existence. Any existing work, such as a poem, will change when it is transplanted into a new context (possibly undergoing adaptation in the process). In such a scenario, any feature of the original work may be transformed, overridden or discarded altogether. Yet to argue that this amounts to an assimilation risks privileging one element to the detriment of the other.

This is not to say that there may not be situations in which one component is effectively assimilated by the other, either temporarily or more extensively within the context of a given song or repertory. Debate on musical rhythm in medieval song has seen much argument among scholars as they try to reconcile what can be conflicting indications from music and text, particularly in repertories where no formal or explicit rhythm has been preserved. It has been suggested that if the pattern of word accents in strophic songs varies from stanza to stanza then the musical rhythm must have varied as well.<sup>18</sup> Some commentators have gone even further, proposing that it should vary from line to line<sup>19</sup>. But how does this compare to repertories where we do have explicit indications of rhythm and the music repeats unaltered each time, regardless of any changes in accent pattern? Is it possible that musical rhythm overrides text rhythm when the two come into contact (assuming that it is not driven by text rhythm in the first place)? If so, then this might be one occasion where Leech-Wilkinson’s earlier comment that “music always wins” holds true.

The effect of Langer’s assimilationist stance is that song is reduced to a single element, in this case music. Similar issues arise when the relationship between text and music is considered as an act of fusion, out of which a new single entity - the song - is born. Whether privileging music or language, the insistence in such accounts on the inseparability of the fused elements places the same kind of

limitations on our treatment of them as Langer does by discounting the possibility that they might preserve some degree of independent existence within the song. Again, it is not clear this is automatically the best way to approach the experience of song, even if there may be contexts in which it is an appropriate attitude to take. The idea that medieval song constitutes a fusion of text and music has proved popular, for example, as scholars attempt to engage with the differences between medieval culture and that of later periods. Witness the following remarks by Leo Treitler (1992, p. 2):

To say “lyric” or “lyrical” is always at least to point up the musical quality in whatever it is to which the word is applied - the singing voice, the theatre, poetry. It may seem paradoxical, but it is characteristic that the word itself came to identify poetry just at a time when poetry came to be conceived as an autonomous art apart from music, about the end of the fourteenth century. This was with the idea that poetry had its own immanent musical qualities. But in the time of our songs, no such separation was conceivable. Song was treated as being itself a kind of speech, not a putting-together of two disparate elements.

This is a response to the different practices and attitudes found in cultures such as those of the medieval period, where orality plays a much bigger role than it does in later literate cultures, and the distinction between poetry and song is much less marked. The verbs *cantar* “to sing” and *dizer/dir* “to say or tell” are often used in the same contexts, for instance. But while song may indeed be “a kind of speech”, that does not necessarily entitle us to reject the idea of it being “a putting-together of two disparate elements” - at least not entirely. Song and speech can fulfil the same communicative function - to tell a story, for example - without this implying that song shares the indivisibility found in normal speech. John Blacking has also argued against the idea that song principally represents a formalization of speech.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, he notes an important distinction between speech and poetry:

To equate poetry with speech is to blur a crucial distinction between words and music. Speech can be propositional as music cannot be: you can argue with words in ways that you cannot argue with music. But poetry is more often like music - “redundant, illocutionary and performative”.<sup>21</sup>

This might suggest that if we regard medieval texts as poetry we could find ourselves moving back towards Langer’s position. But as has already been observed,

the changing concept of poetry through the centuries means that we need to think carefully about how we categorize the linguistic element of song to avoid importing anachronistic considerations.

Like Agawu, I would prefer to move away from thinking of song as consisting of “poem and music” and adopt a looser term for its textual component (“text” is the one I will adopt here).<sup>22</sup> Besides the performative aspect ascribed by Blacking, it could also be argued that the creative process which results in medieval song is closer to the moment of transmission - in which words and music are delivered simultaneously to an audience, regardless of the processes that have brought them together - than is customary in later or more formal repertoires. The independent circulation of texts or melodies does suggest some kind of conceptual separation on the part of medieval song creators, even if we stop short of regarding them as entirely independent entities. The use and re-use of texts in different contexts has also led some scholars to champion the unity of words and music in medieval song, as a defence of its aesthetic value and integrity. However, this seems largely a product of comparison with repertoires more in accordance with the “post-Renaissance” set of norms: once these are discarded, no such defence is necessary.

I would therefore reject both of these models - applied in a strict sense - as unduly restrictive: neither assimilation nor fusion can adequately deal with all the issues raised by song. If, as Agawu says, song presents us with “two nominal semiotic systems” then we have to be able to accommodate their respective contributions as well as the characteristics of the newly-created entity. Whatever the nature of the process, I do not believe that the act of creating song necessarily annihilates all trace of its constituent elements (though in some contexts it may come close to this). If such traces persist we need to have the analytic tools to recognize and deal with them accordingly.



## 2. *Co-existence of elements in an irreducible relationship*

Faced with the difficulties noted above, many commentators prefer to adopt looser formulations that see song more as some kind of co-existence between the two systems of music and language - Agawu's second category. The degree to which their relationship is spelt out often varies between accounts (when it is spelt out at all). Switten, for example, talks about "musico-poetic juxtapositions" (1999, p. 6) in her discussion of the problems that the practice of contrafaction causes for traditional rhetorical accounts of song. Stevens takes a similar approach when he describes the components of medieval song as being "two parallel synchronous shapes" (1986, p. 499) i.e. words and music are "not indivisible; when they are together, they are closely analogous, or parallel" (1986, p. 498). Neither is denying that the two might exist in very close relationship in particular cases, or that the connections should be fully explored for the song or song repertory under discussion, but both feel the need to reformulate the underlying concept towards something vaguer and less restrictive/prescriptive.

Looser formulations such as these provide more room for scholars working on medieval repertories to take account of the compositional practices they encounter - new text supplied for melodies or vice versa, in contexts where it may appear that the only thing linking text and music together is the physical shape of the composition i.e. a certain number of lines of a certain length. The main requirement is that we should have both words and music in physical proximity: once that has been satisfied, the details of the linkages between them can be worked out on whatever basis is most appropriate for the piece, genre or repertory in question. Since this base formulation makes no further demands in terms of the underlying concept of song, it allows the maximum degree of flexibility when we come to assess how the components are combined.

One advantage of this is that the components can be treated with whatever degree of independence or interdependence the circumstances suggest. Another is that it makes no background demands that either text or music should compromise its nature in order to be incorporated into the song. This is an important step if we

consider that there are two different systems involved, each with its own means of expression. To take the opposite line to strict fusionist accounts, it may well be that there is a fundamental incompatibility at the heart of song i.e. that the elements are different in nature, exist in an irreducible relationship and can never truly “fuse” into a single entity. The question of how the brain processes the two systems, music and language, and their degree of functional interrelatedness remains a topic under exploration, but one that will have consequences for any overall view of song.<sup>23</sup> Take this suggestion by John Blacking (1992, p. 20), for instance:

On balance, the evidence of the lateralization of brain function suggests that speech and music may be produced with the help of two different, though relatable, systems and that *they cannot be united on equal terms* [my italics]. They can be combined in song, but complementarity is not the same as unity (e.g. you could not *unite* the attention required to drive a car in heavy traffic and to carry on a complicated conversation without almost certain disaster, but you could combine them with unequal attention to each task) ...

If Blacking is right, then we may have to accept that the components of song exist in an unequal (and perhaps shifting) relationship. The ideal of the perfect fusion of music and language may be just that. The question then becomes: what balance, or what sort of balance, do they exist in? Formulations which loosen the *type* of connection between them, as well as the degree of linkage, provide more room for textual features to be treated in textual terms and musical ones in musical terms. Approaching from the standpoint of the song text, Mark Booth (1981, p. 7) defends its textual/physical/linguistic nature in the face of the song melody:

Song words need not themselves be particularly musical in sound. Verse that is highly patterned with musical sound of its own may clash with the music of its tune. Except in pursuit of certain special effects, as in lullabies, verse does not qualify for song by approaching the condition of music. Song verse is not assimilated to music but *accommodated* to it [my italics]. Words must be adapted to assertive regulation by the tones and rhythm of music upon their own sound and pace.

Switching from “assimilation” to “accommodation” in his description performs the same function as moving to “juxtaposition” as the base for song rather than any more involved form of combination. It is interesting, however, that Booth raises the suggestion of conflict between words and music as part of his discussion; besides

the “assertive regulation” mentioned above, he goes on to talk about the “pressure” of music and the need for words to “maintain their integrity” within the song framework (1981, pp. 7-8).<sup>24</sup> Perhaps in trying to acknowledge the contributions of the two systems “conflict” will continue to provide a powerful metaphor, just as “language” does for the structure of music. I am still not sure that it is an appropriate way to consider their relationship - we may simply be looking at a looser, less interdependent framework of the type described by Switten and Stevens, or a deliberate choice not to mirror patterns on the part of the song’s creator, or a repertory whose compositional/performance practices privilege one element over the other.

Formulations of the types described above represent an important step in accommodating the differing contributions of words and music to the song, and as such provide a better basis for song analysis than fusion accounts. The flexibility they offer means that repertories can be assessed on their own basis, using criteria that are appropriate to them. However, there remain problems associated with the very looseness that gives them their advantage. Booth does not expand on how “accommodation” might work on the broader level - what consequences or compromises it might involve on the part of the text - although he does use the term in the narrower sense of “fitting the text to the tune” in his discussion of broadside ballads (1981, p. 110). Nor is it clear that base concepts which rely primarily on the physical proximity of text and music will sufficiently account for the nature of the combined entity - the song - though the more probing or comprehensive applications of them may come close. As Agawu puts it (1992, p. 6):

If song is a genuine alloy, that is, a self-sufficient and self-regulating semiotic system, then its identity cannot be defined simply by listing the ingredients that go into its making. By the same token, analysis cannot be content with a taxonomy of inputs, or with an interpretation that shows little or no trace of the inputs’ new environment.

For medieval repertories, the capacity to address each piece/repertory/genre in its own terms through a more flexible base concept is valuable as it allows us to tailor our base concept to the surviving evidence. This may be patchy, depending on the repertory, so such flexibility is useful in getting the most out of what we have. However, it does carry an associated risk of fragmentation: the parameters for song

can be defined anew each time, and similarities between works or repertoires can be obscured.

For those reasons, then, it may not be enough to adopt a formulation of this type. Agawu's challenge of accounting for the syntax of song as a "genre", or as a new entity in itself, remains.

### 3. *Pyramid structure (words on top, music at base)*

Agawu (1992, pp. 6-7) succinctly describes the pyramid model as:

a compound structure in which words, lying at the top, provide access to meaning, while the music lies at the base and supports the signification of text. This is a paradoxical formulation which gives priority to either or both systems: music is the indispensable foundation of song structure, but song only means through its words, which provide access to the semantic dimension.

As Agawu notes, on the face of it this model seems to acknowledge the different contributions of both systems: music gets to provide the structure of what we hear, while language takes on the speech role and gives us the "message" of the song. However, the divided functions effectively confine each element to its own particular area with little room for overlap between them - it is almost the opposite of a fusion model in this respect. It is not clear how the experience of music and the experience of language combine to become anything more than the "taxonomy of inputs" Agawu criticises above, or how their roles might interact.

Agawu describes this model as occurring predominantly in text-centred analysis of song, so it is perhaps not surprising that it places "meaning" at the top of the pyramid. Musical meaning is notoriously hard to pin down, making it tempting to see the melodic component as fulfilling some other role, probably structural, from which it can shape the delivery of the text. It is not impossible for the musical component to have influence on the meaning of the overall song, but this model expects it to do so indirectly, its influence refracted through the text (e.g. in cases where the musical setting seems out of step with the sentiments expressed in the

lyrics). It is the text that is the primary driver of the song (and of any analysis made of it).<sup>25</sup>

Apart from the difficulties already noted in accounting for the combined entity when there is so little overlap between the components, the focus on “meaning” in the pyramid model perhaps loses sight of the fact that meaning is only one dimension of song - an important one to be sure, but not the only one that matters. Many aspects of song can potentially impact on our overall experience of it: some effects textual, others musical and others created by their interactions and the interplay between them. The experience of song, in its totality, is key here as it will affect what we take out of it. To reduce “effect” to “meaning” - particularly in its narrow sense of semantic meaning - is to lose sight of that experience.

Text-centred analyses of medieval song can sometimes result from the state of the evidence (i.e. lack of surviving music) or from attempts to draw comparisons with pieces or repertoires which seem likely to be songs but whose music has not survived. There is little we can do in these circumstances but resort to textual analysis. However, it is important that in doing so that we should recognise that we are missing the contribution of the musical element and treat the results accordingly. For later periods which do not suffer evidential problems of this type, the pyramid model will always remain skewed towards the textual component and will produce a partial picture - even when some attempt is made to take the musical component into account.

There is one idea found in discussions of medieval song that seems to have something in common with the pyramid model: that of the melody being a vehicle for delivering the song text.<sup>26</sup> This links back in with the question of medieval attitudes to song and speech, and its main point is to refocus our attention on the melodic component away from the “post-Renaissance” ideas of musical transcendentalism described earlier and towards a more “traditional”, “folk-style” outlook on the role of song melodies. The strophic nature of much medieval song sits poorly with later ideas of musical development and text-music sensitivity, so such refocusing is useful in defending the idea that a melody can be repeated for

(many) successive stanzas of a text without resulting in an impoverished song experience. Combined with “lack of correspondence” between features that might be expected to be more closely related - such as different types of accent - this repetition can be seen as problematic even by scholars working on medieval repertories.<sup>27</sup> However, the “melody as vehicle” idea is not usually deployed in an extreme form (which would bring it closer to the pyramid model) and does not tend to imply the same focus on the text and its meaning.

#### *4. Confluence of independent overlapping systems*

The final model described by Agawu is potentially the most powerful of the four, and is graphically represented by a set of three overlapping circles: one for music, one for words and one for song itself, with areas of overlap between each pair of domains plus an area in the middle where all three intersect. Its power comes from the fact that it acknowledges the independent nature of the systems involved in song and can cater for the area of their interaction - unlike the previous models. In contrast to the fusion model, it makes no demands that one component should disappear inside the other, so that the possibility of independent textual and musical effects is retained. Nor does it follow the pyramid model in limiting the way in which each should contribute to the whole or prescribing that the communication of semantic meaning should be the overall objective. Unlike the “co-existence of irreducible elements” model, under which the components can approach one another and exist in close proximity (but ultimately remain separate), it does provide a defined space in which their interactions can add up to something more: the third domain of song itself.

However, there is a glaring problem with this conception of song, as Agawu admits (p. 7): what is song that is neither words nor music, nor some combination of the two? While the “three-overlapping-circles” model fits better with the two levels of song (the level of the individual components and the level of the song as a whole) and incorporates many of the advantages of the previous three, this question cannot go unanswered if the model is to prove workable in practice.

Agawu himself does not offer an answer - or an alternative model - though he does draw one conclusion from the impasse (p. 7; italics in original):

Perhaps, then, what the model points to is song as process, not product. What is interesting, in other words, is not what song *is*, but what it *becomes* in its perpetual striving for a concrete mode of existence.

Interesting as this suggestion is, it does not solve the conceptual problem inherent in this model: nor does the analytical method for song that Agawu goes on to propose (though he clearly aims to take a more “open” stance on the question of word-music relations and thus avoid some of the methodological problems found with the previous models). Describing song as a process adds a dynamic aspect that is useful when studying something that, as Switten puts it, “unfolds in time”. However, the same could be said of most musical genres, without that necessarily meaning that they are “only process” or that there is no stable end-product that we can analyse (the “what it becomes”). Earlier in the article, Agawu formulates this as “process-orientated” (1992, p. 4; see full quote below), which is perhaps a better description, allowing more room for song as an object.

So if we feel that song is something other than the process of combining the inputs from music and language - but not necessarily something that can stand on its own as an object independent of them - we will need a different model, and one that addresses this question. The issue of the different levels in song and the related issue of their interaction has been at the root of much of the previous discussion: the fusion or assimilation model allows only one level; the irreducible co-existence model places both inputs on the same level while positing a second which is never defined; while the pyramid model offers two levels separated by function where the language component dominates the main song level.

If none of the models offered by Agawu is thus satisfactory, what are the characteristics that we would like to find in a better model of song?

### *Characteristics of a proposed model*

If a poem, in the hands of a composer, is nothing more than a sequence of words, can song be redefined as a structure of words-and-music or language-and-music as distinct from poem-and-music? And if this redefinition allows us to explain the not uncommon practice of modifying the poet's words to make them more suitable for a particular musical context, what is to stop us from going one stage further and defining song not as an amalgam of words-and-music or language-and-music but as a fusion of text-and-music, using "text" to register an interpretative move from a bounded or closed "work" (a poem) to an open, process-orientated and irreducibly plural "text"? (Agawu, 1992, p. 4)

Any model for song should be *able to accommodate two levels* - that of the components, language and music, and that of the song as a whole. I do not believe that song can exist independently of its constituent elements (and from the lack of further discussion neither does Agawu) so these two levels should be sufficient. The model should make clear that song is formed when words and music are brought together as some kind of *set of textual and musical effects*. It should not attempt to prescribe *how they are combined* or fix the *degree of interdependence* - this is something that will need to be approached in the context of the particular song or song repertory - but should be able to contain all of their potential interactions i.e. the *totality of effects* across all aspects of the song. It should be possible for effects to be evaluated in their own terms, i.e. textual or musical, as required by the context. The model should define a *structured space* within which these text-music interactions can occur. It should allow for these to be *dynamic*, taking account both of the *process* by which song is formed and of potential changes in the *balance between the elements* as the song progresses.<sup>28</sup> By focusing on the broader category of "effect" rather than "meaning" we can also orient the model more towards the *experience of song*, thus respecting its time dimension and giving it as much of a practical (rather than purely analytic) focus as possible.

The set of different textual and musical variables in song form a "*matrix of possibilities*"<sup>29</sup> i.e. a set of potential choices which are then embodied when the song is performed.<sup>30</sup> The existence of *choice* is important - whether it is choice on the part of a song creator in deciding how text and music should be combined, or the choice of a performer to respect or discard those decisions. As Blacking (1982, p. 21) puts it:



Music and speech have no intrinsic power to dominate as cognitive systems, because of some proved or unproved hierarchy: emphasis on one or the other, or any attempts to unite them, are the consequences of their use by human beings in social contexts.

It is easy in the search for analytical models to lose sight of *song as a human activity*. Yet the embodied nature of song, the fact that it is rooted in the human *voice*, combining systems so fundamental to us as music and language, sets it apart from other musical or textual genres.<sup>31</sup> Wherever there is song, there is at least an implied singer behind it, if not an attested one (this is useful for repertoires such as the *Cantigas*, where evidence of actual performance is scant). The voice that we hear in the implied moment of performance is an amalgam of creator, performer and any other intermediaries involved in the process of transmission - roles that can be combined into a single person on a single occasion, but may also be separate in person and time. It will fall to the performer to realize (in the most basic sense of the term i.e. “to bring into reality” or to “make real”) the set of choices passed on by the creator, as far as these can be discerned and as far as they are respected. But behind all these roles lie human beings exercising choices in their use of music and language, expressed through the instrument of the human voice. As an amalgam of roles, the implied singer can thus reflect the multiple and varied purposes behind the song.

### ***Exploratory definitions of song***

I would agree with Mark Booth when he cautions that “defining song is a descriptive and exploratory matter” (1981, p. 5). Since song appears to be found across all human societies, coming up with any set of principles that can accommodate the entire range of songs - past and present - is an impossible task. However, like Booth, I believe it is a task worth attempting for the light it can potentially shed on song as a mode of textual-musical activity. The act of constructing models forces us to confront issues that would otherwise remain dormant or unexplored, and even if the results must remain provisional and incomplete, we will at least have laid a basis for further discussion.

To that end, I would like to propose my own set of principles for song - descriptive and exploratory though they may be. The motivations for doing so are pragmatic rather than prescriptive i.e. to make explicit the background assumptions underlying my discussion of more practical questions of text-music relations elsewhere in this thesis, with a view to feeding any insights gained back into the future practical discussions. They may stop short of being a fully-worked out model, but I hope will clarify some of the stances adopted (a tentative model is available in the Appendix).

Let us return to the question posed at the start of this piece: “what makes a song?”

### 1. *A song must have words and music.*

Deciding what lies outside our frame of reference has to be the first step in framing any definition. I would regard this as a minimally acceptable definition. It is intended to exclude pieces that may have been labelled as song (by their creators or by others) but which lack one of its constituent elements, such as non-musical poems or instrumental pieces with titles such as “songs without words”. Any use of the term “song” in these cases is largely metaphorical, intended to bring out the song-like qualities of the work concerned. We need to be clear, however, that this refers to pieces which from their inception have never been in possession of both the components necessary for song. It is not intended to disqualify pieces that have lost a component somewhere along the way (e.g. medieval pieces preserved in text-only manuscripts), provided we have some good reason for believing them to be songs in the first place. With one component missing we will obviously be greatly limited in what we can say about such pieces, even if we do grant them the status of song.

*2. Within the song, the two elements must exist in meaningful combination.*

This is intended to exclude any work in which words and music are both present but not meaningfully combined. The concept of “meaningful combination” is problematic (meaningful in what way? who confers meaning?) but it does at least allow us to separate out accidental juxtapositions and those instances where an element appears to be present for purely cosmetic or decorative purposes. Requiring there to be a meaningful combination enables us to say that a third object is created by the coming together of the two elements - the song.

*3. The song must be performable.*

This condition says that to be a song, a piece must have the potential to be performed. If the combination of words and music is not performable, it remains at the level of a theoretical construct (i.e. potential song) without ever crossing the boundary to become song proper. It stipulates “performable” for two reasons: firstly to avoid prescribing any particular mode of performance, and secondly to ensure that status as song is not dependent on the circumstantial condition of having been performed. In the case of pieces where only one element has come down to us, we are effectively taking their performability on trust.

*4. A song consists of a song text and a song melody in combination.*

The issue of what distinction there might be - if any - between song texts and other types of text which are not song (and similarly for music) is a difficult one. It is not clear what special properties or characteristics a text might have in order to be, or as a result of being, part of a song. While we would not want to drive an artificial wedge between song components and the wider fields from which they come, I do think it is worth maintaining the distinction even if it is not clear what it represents. It allows us to deal more easily with pre-existent components, such as poems, which may be transformed (via repetitions, expansions or redistributions) as

they are incorporated into the song, by providing us with a means of distinguishing the new text from its source. I am going to use the term “song melody” to refer to the musical component of a song; “melody” here is used in its broadest sense to cover all aspects of the musical setting that constitute part of the song. These could potentially include harmony, instrumentation and any other aspects relevant to the repertory in question.

*5. A song is constituted by elements of different kinds.*

The purpose behind this statement is to assert the right of each component to its own forms, functions and interests within the larger entity that is the song - a shorthand way of asserting the right of the creator to include the full range of textual and musical possibilities open to him/her, including features found in pieces that are not song. This is important when we come to analyse songs, so that we respect the nature of the contribution from each element and make use of an appropriate range of analytical tools.

*6. Within the song the elements remain separable and distinct.*

This follows on from the above, and asserts the right of each component to continue to exist as an entity in its own right after its incorporation into the song. This is a condition intended to combat the idea that song is a unitary entity, in which the components are somehow fused together. If that were the case, then they would have become inseparable and any distinctive features of text and music would have been subsumed (see previous point). Note that the term used here is “separable”, not “separate”: I am not seeking to deny that there is a relationship between text and music in song, merely to ensure that it is evaluated in its own right (rather than assumed).

*7. The two elements are not necessarily mutually dependent.*

If song texts and song melodies are independent entities, the relationship between them has to be “negotiated” - a process that takes place during the creation of the song. This process can result in various types of relationship, of which mutual dependence is just one. The degree to which text and music are interdependent is something that has to be established in the course of any analysis.

*8. Song exists on two levels at once*

Song exists on two levels, the parts simultaneously forming and contributing to the whole. As such there are always two levels of discussion available: that of the components and that of the song as a whole. Which is the more appropriate is something that has to be established according to the individual song and the context concerned, by means of analysis. Created by the bringing together of text and music, the song then acts as a structured space in which their interactions can occur. In terms of the relationship between text and music, song is an inherently dynamic object. Following Harrán (1986), I would use the word “complex” in its chemical sense of a structure (rather than “union”, which suggests ideas of fusion or permanent bonding) to describe this object.

*9. The balance between the elements need not be constant, nor equally weighted.*

Once the initial condition of having text and music has been satisfied, there is nothing that requires that the two elements should be of equal importance to the song, or indeed of equal importance or prominence over the duration of the song. The two elements exist in a movable balance: at any given point in the song, one or other element may be uppermost in terms of prominence (the importance or attention accorded to it by creator, performer or audience). Constant equal weighting is simply one possibility among many along a spectrum of importance or attention which privileges textual features at one end and musical features at the

other, though without ever reaching the point where a component disappears altogether. If this happened, the piece would cease to be a song (see the Appendix “Mapping the limits of song” for further discussion of this point).

*10. The setting is the set of creative decisions which, when realized, will result in a performance.*

The term “setting” works on two levels, as noted by Harrán (1986): on the one hand, it refers to the set of creative decisions that make up the song, and which, when realized, will result in a performance; on the other, to the physical process of fitting text and music together. The second of these levels is contained within the first, representing a subset of the creative decisions that must be made in order for the song to come into existence. The set of decisions, however, encompasses all the potential aspects of the song, including accompaniment or instrumentation where these are considered part of the song itself. The setting can be tighter - if it attempts to control or prescribe more aspects of the song - or looser if more areas are left to the discretion of performers. It represents the interim, practical step between the existence of the (potential) song as uncombined elements and its realization in performance. We need a concept of “setting” that emphasizes the fact that the song arises out of the choices made by its creator (or creators, where appropriate) but is non-specific so as not to impose a particular set of choices on to our general definition.

### **Notes**

1. Montoya Martínez (1998-99, pp. 130-131). In this case, the manuscript is *E*. Here, as in the previous chapter, I will use the term “underlaid” to refer to text set to music in the manuscripts, though this can be more accurately described as “overlaid”.
2. See, for example, the “cellules mélodiques” described in Rossell (1998, pp. 125-130).
3. Mettmann (1986-89, p. 41): “En cuanto a la disposición de los versos, nos atenemos exclusivamente a la rima, pues sólo así se perciben con suficiente claridad las estructuras estróficas, a veces muy complicadas”. He goes on to acknowledge: “Eso no excluye que los

musicólogos, basándose en las unidades melódicas, den en algunos casos la preferencia al arreglo en forma de versos largos con una o hasta varias rimas interiores”.

4. See Wulstan (1982) and Beltrán (1984a, 1984b). Ferreira (2004, p. 134) points out the difficulties inherent in trying to deduce musical structure from text structure (“...a presumed parallel that historical evidence shows to be far from universally applicable...”) and argues instead on the basis of pieces surviving in the Andalusian oral tradition as found in present-day North Africa.
5. See, for example, the assumption by Marshall which allows him to suggest relationships between pieces by Peire Cardenal for which the melodies have not survived, and pieces by other troubadours: “The practice necessarily entailed a degree of metrical imitation. If we assume that, as a normal rule, the tune was not modified, then the poet who penned the new text was forced to imitate his model to the extent of reproducing exactly the lengths of its metrical lines and the disposition of its masculine and feminine rhymes” (Marshall, 1978, p. 20). He goes on to specify that this “would constitute the minimum amount of metrical imitation compatible with the *unaltered* [my italics] reproduction of the existing tune”, but his method depends on finding at least this amount of imitation between texts and he also refers to “the practical exigencies of setting new words to old music”.
6. See Chapters. 1 and 2 for practical examples of melodic re-use in the *Cantigas* which show how textual and musical structures are re-worked in different contexts.
7. “The kind of clarity sought by analysts does not have this practical telos. It is rarely their aim to analyse the concept of a musical work in order to understand the practice of music within which that concept functions” (Goehr 1992, p. 75). A detailed discussion of the tensions between theory and practice - which she sees as inevitable and ultimately destructive - is given in her Chapter 3 “The limits of analysis and the need for history” (pp. 69-86).
8. See the comments of John Blacking, for example (quoted later in this chapter).
9. An indication of this can be seen in the size of the general section of the bibliography accompanying the New Grove article “Song” (by Geoffrey Chew and others), compared with the historically-oriented sections containing accounts of particular repertoires.
10. Daniel Leech-Wilkinson (1990), “Right at the wrong time”: review of Don Harrán *In defense of music: The case of music as argued by a singer and scholar of the late fifteenth century*, *Times Literary Supplement*, March 16-22, p. 185 (quoted in Agawu, 1992).
11. The studies by Ivey (1970) and Stevens (1960) are typical in this respect.
12. Retrieved April 21, 2006, from <http://www.grovemusic.com>.
13. See, for example, the following remarks by Chew: “Even if the melody is carefully fitted to one strophe, it may fail to suit other strophes equally well. Strophic songs, nevertheless, may well represent the most fundamental song type of all, and they have been cultivated by every type of song composer, even the most literary-minded. Moreover, they have for centuries formed a basic part of the repertory of popular song, notably of the (often sizable) part of the popular repertory originating in the theatre” (1980; retrieved April 21, 2006, from <http://www.grovemusic.com>).

14. Retrieved April 21, 2006, from <http://www.grovemusic.com>.
15. Boyce Allen (1984) goes further than this, suggesting that medieval and modern lyric differ in their aims and in the experience they offer their respective audiences.
16. See the suggestion by John Stevens (1986, p. 499) that both text and melody relate to a common numerical pattern rather than directly to each other.
17. See, for example, the reaction of Nicolas Ruwet (1961, pp. 41-47) against the positions of both Langer and Boris de Schloezer.
18. See van der Werf (1987).
19. Rossell (1996, p. 45): "Anglès (1958: 395) afirmaba que métrica e ritmo non son interdependentes. Isto obrigaría a cambiar de ritmo non só en cada estrofa, senón en cada verso. Este camino levaba irremediabilmente a unha transcripción en 'ritmo libre' ou prosódico-textual que Ugo Sesini xa propuxera no ano 1939".
20. Blacking (1982, p. 19): "It is often assumed that song is an extension or embellishment of speech, which is the primary mode of communication, and that there is a continuum of increasing formalization from speech to song. But song is not inherently either a more or less restricted code than speech: the relative dominance of song or speech, as of their affective and cognitive elements, in any genre or performance of a genre, depends not so much on some absolute attributes that speech and song might have, as on people's 'intentions to mean' in different social situations, and on their motivation and the psychological assumptions that they invoke".
21. Blacking (1982, p. 18), where he also points out that in some societies poetry is categorized alongside music rather than language.
22. Agawu (1992, p. 4). However I am less comfortable with his shift from the term "amalgam" to the term "fusion", for the reasons outlined above.
23. Mithen (2005, p. 62) provides a useful summary: "... both music and language are constituted by a series of mental modules. These have a degree of independence from one another, so that one can acquire or be born with a deficit in one specific area of music or language processing but not in others. The separation of the modular music and language systems, however, is not complete, as several modules, such as prosody, appear to be shared between the two systems".
24. "The ways in which song words are subject to the pressure of their music are subtle and fascinating. They are reinforced, accented, blurred, belied, inspired to new meaning, in a continual interplay. In that interplay there is a constant tug against the resolution of the words to carry out their own business. The words must have an internal discipline to maintain their integrity in their cooperation and in their competition with the music" (Booth, 1981, pp. 7-8).
25. On the problems of expecting semantic meaning to be the main determinant in song, see Blacking's discussion of the different (and multiple) ways in which words and music could be combined by the Venda people of Southern Africa (1982, p. 22). Several of the points he makes remind us that the song text may in some circumstances be subordinated to its music e.g. where he notes that: "The musical framework of a song, established by the opening phrase, influenced the structure of additional verses that were invented, and sometimes connections of meaning could be musical rather than verbal. Thus



one verse might succeed another not because it pursued a verbally expressed idea but because its words repeated a pattern of speech-tone that had been mirrored in the melody of the previous verse.” He also raises the case of the “slotting in” of “strings of words” such that these have “symbolic meaning in the context of the song, without necessarily specifying or referring to what they could mean in ordinary discourse” (p. 22).

26. For a clear summary of this idea, see Aubrey (1996, p. 129).

27. For example, see the comments by Rossell in note 19 above.

28. Ruwet (1972, p. 54) refers to “... toute une dialectique de la répétition et du changement ...”.

29. Following Dobozy (2005) and Zaerr (1998), this term is taken from Seymour Chatman (*A theory of meter*, 1965, p. 104): “The meter of a poem is not some fixed and unequivocal characteristic, but rather a structure or matrix of possibilities which may emerge in different ways as different vocal renditions. Obviously, these will not be of equal merit; but value judgments should not obscure the range of linguistic possibility even before inquiry begins. It is a mistake in method to confuse the metrical abstraction (in the sense of “derivation of common features”) with any of its actualizations”.

30. See Dobozy (2005, p. 9).

31. See, for example, the comments of Booth (1982, p. 6): “Where the song properly exists, where it is words for the singing voice, it has possibilities not recognized among poems for reading.” On the musical side, Ruwet (1972, p. 52) argues that: “Les significations linguistiques, de toute façon, gardent une présence au sein de la musique. D’ailleurs, dans la mesure où la voix est, pour l’homme, avant toute chose, l’organe de la parole, dès qu’elle intervient en musique, le langage, comme tel, est présent, et cela même si le chant s’emancipe en de purs mélismes, même si le texte devient totalement incompréhensible. Et c’est un fait, à quoi les esthéticiens eussent dû attacher plus d’importance, que jamais, pour ainsi dire, la musique vocale ne se passe du support des mots: il semble qu’il soit impossible de voir dans la voix un instrument comme les autres”.

## ***Appendix***

### ***Mapping the limits of song: a tentative model***

What would happen if the balance between the elements of a song became so unequal that one of them declined to the point where it was effectively no longer there? This is the situation that lies at either end of the spectrum of prominence outlined above. It has

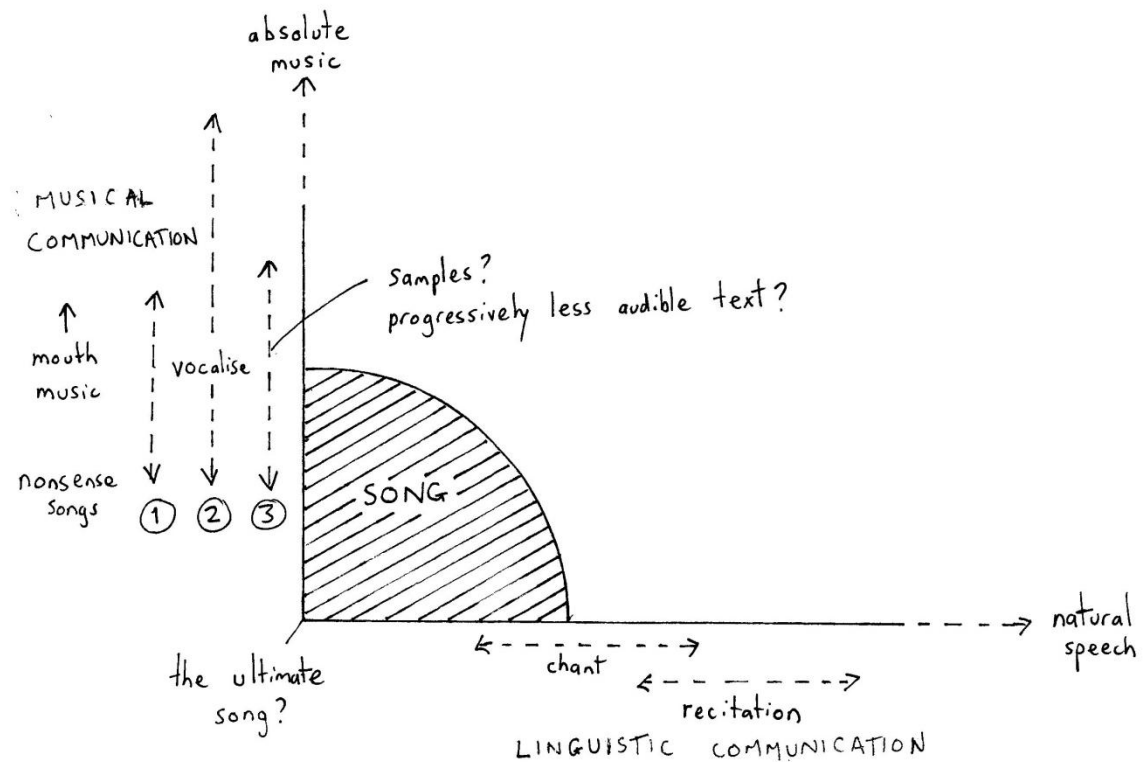


Figure 1. Suggested model of song.

already been argued that if that is the case, the piece has ceased to be a song (and become some other type of musical or literary work). But by mapping the limits of song, at the extremes of the spectrum, we can gain further insight into how songs might be differentiated from other types of work which are not song and in the process perhaps learn more about the functions of song. A suggested model is shown in Figure 1.

If the musical component declines, we move out along an axis past the point where “song” becomes “chant” - strongly resembling song in the case, say, of more elaborate chant melodies (when asked to describe what the performer is doing, we would probably still use the word “singing” rather than “chanting”) - through simpler and more recitational styles of chant to the point where the musical component flattens out to become something that still represents organized patterns of sound, but which we would no longer call “music”. Go further, past spoken recitation, and we would eventually arrive at natural speech. The label of that particular axis should therefore be linguistic communication, one of the functions of song. The centre of graph should be a quadrant, representing song as a field - containing many possibilities - rather than a single object. That would be too prescriptive, and besides it is not clear how the different varieties of song should be placed as we approach the centre.

The other axis is slightly more problematic to identify, owing to the continued uncertainties as to the functions - and functioning - of music. Exactly what the musical component contributes to the overall song in terms of function will have to remain an open question, but for now we will label it “musical communication”. At the end of this second axis lies “absolute music” - music which has no textual component and no dependence on

text. Plotting the intermediate steps as we move away from the centre is harder here too. A progressive decline in the textual (linguistic) component is harder to trace, and it is not clear what role the presence of the human voice might play. I can see three routes by which this might happen, depending on the way in which we approach the idea of linguistic value (these are labelled 1-3 on the diagram). Approach 1 represents a decline in the sense (grammatical or otherwise) of the song text, moving through nonsense songs to repertoires like mouth music which have a nominal text whose principal function is to serve as a vehicle for the melody. As in the case of chant, we would probably still use “singing” to describe what someone performing in this style is doing: if so, this would indicate some degree of overlap with the field of song. The second approach describes a declining quantity of text in the song. As the number of syllables of text available to carry the melody gets less and less we get increasingly long stretches of something approaching purely musical communication. I have placed the vocalise at the boundary point on the diagram: while it may appear that the vocalise has no text, it is perhaps more accurate to regard it as a melody sung to a single syllable - the minimum amount of text possible according to this quantitative method. However, the vocalise would represent the limit of this approach. If the presence of a human voice is essential to song, it is not possible to have a text with no syllables (which would move us beyond the boundary of song into the broader field of music in general). The third approach looks to the way in which the linguistic value of a text may be affected by its treatment or presentation within the song. If an utterance is treated in such a way that it can be regarded as just another pattern of organized sound, deployed along with all the other patterns of non-human, non-linguistic organized sounds making up the musical texture, then its value as text has declined: once an utterance is being used purely for its value as sound - or perceived as such - with no regard for its linguistic content, we have again left the field of song behind. This would cover songs which have text but where this is presented in such a way that it is hard to hear or follow, or the use of short vocal samples as part of a larger musical texture, although it is not clear where either of these should be placed on the diagram.

At the centre of the diagram, where the two axes intersect, we have the perfect balance of linguistic and musical communication in one package - the ultimate song (perhaps). But until we have a more accurate model of the field of song itself it is not possible to say what the likely characteristics of this song might be.

## CONCLUSIONS

Over the course of its three chapters, this thesis has sought to re-orient discussion of the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* around the important axis of song and to provide the foundations for doing so. While song is not the only reference point relevant to the collection (traditional historical, literary/musical and manuscript studies all have their part to play), it has remained a relatively neglected aspect in *Cantigas* studies - partly because of the difficulty in bringing together the existing editions and partly because of the interdisciplinary nature of the topic.

Chapter 1 aimed to remedy some of the problems with the editions by delineating the basic characteristics of both music and text. If the *Cantigas* as a repertory represent a set of choices (e.g. of forms and structures, or the decision to pursue narrative within a strict formal context), then a solid grasp of the basics can in turn improve our understanding of those choices. We can build a context to site these in through comparison with the choices evident in other repertories - textual and musical - of similar age and which show signs of having some practices in common with the *Cantigas*. Within this large body of material, it is important to strike a balance between the typical and the unusual if we are to unlock the compositional practices behind the patterns and structures found. Pieces that are atypical can help set out the limits of those practices, and point to options that are not taken up in the rest of the collection - possibilities that were known and would have been available to its creators, but which have for some reason been left to one side. But there is still more to do in terms of clarifying how each component works in the more typical pieces, in picking out the “basics” of the collection as we find them. If we can do that, we will be better able to identify moments of creativity and innovation within the defined patterns and structures, achieve a fuller appreciation of the skills on display, and will also have a more solid basis on which to build subsequent investigations of the way text and music combine.

In the opening chapter, text and music were largely discussed separately: this allowed each component to be studied in its own terms, i.e. acknowledging the

possible existence of purely musical or textual characteristics without assuming that these are necessarily linked. Chapter 2 then sought to bring the two components back together to approach the question of the *Cantigas* as song, considering this from a variety of angles, within the key context of the manuscript sources. This latter is even more important for the *Cantigas* than for other repertoires because of the elaborately planned nature of the collection's manuscripts and the evidence they provide of active editing on the part of copyists and compilers. The previous chapter showed how the small differences that result can be significant in the context of the separate textual and musical structures found in the *Cantigas*; Chapter 2 considers how such differences can impact on our view of the text-music relationship and the creative processes that lie behind it. The challenge here is one of integration: to bring together all the different aspects of text and music - separately and in combination - to achieve a realistic picture of how this substantial song collection was created. This may or may not conform to the scenarios suggested by other textual-musical repertoires of the time (e.g. in its degree of orality), but needs to be congruent with the evidence from the manuscript sources if it is to stand up to scrutiny. At the moment this integrated picture has yet to emerge, although the contribution by Parkinson and Jackson (2006) provides a valuable starting point with its examination of the processes behind the creation of the manuscripts. This thesis does not pretend to have achieved such integration, but it is hoped that the multiple views of the text-music relationship presented in Chapter 2 - partial and overlapping as they are - offer some progress toward it.

While Chapter 2 examined text-music relations within the collection, Chapter 3 looked to broaden this out to consider the relationship between words and music in song in general. Using the question of line division in the *Cantigas* as a starting point, it asked how this type of medieval repertory might challenge existing views of song - whether because some of the information we might expect to base our analysis on is missing (e.g. rhythm), because of "looser" aspects of composition (e.g. a high level of borrowing and circulation of materials) and/or reproduction (e.g. *mouvance*), or because the "reduced" informational context encourages us to lean more heavily more on the information we do have than we would do for later

and better documented repertoires. But which elements are linked, and in what ways? Are the linkages consistent across a whole repertoire i.e. constituting some kind of practice, or do they vary from piece to piece and/or with the contributions of different individuals? In this situation, the background assumptions we hold about song and the relationship(s) between its two constituent components, words and music, come more into play. Four possible models for song discussed by Agawu (1992) were first considered, but none of these proved satisfactory in being able to accommodate interactions between the different inputs and the different levels that potentially exist in song. The chapter therefore concluded by proposing its own set of descriptive characteristics and principles of song (albeit in a tentative and exploratory manner). The next challenge will be to translate these theoretical insights and feed them back into the practical study of the *Cantigas* - their original inspiration - so as to achieve a deeper and more flexible understanding of text-music relations there.

The picture presented across this thesis may be a complex one, and aspects of it have been left deliberately loose to avoid imposing too many assumptions on the material under study. But if there are any key themes for the *Cantigas* which unite the three chapters, they are those of *choice*, *voice* and *skill*. The idea of a song as a set of creative choices is a powerful one, whether these choices are exercised at the general level of the repertoire or genre, or by an individual song creator choosing to give greater or lesser prominence to certain elements within a piece - or indeed to innovate, thus expanding the frame of reference for the context he/she is working within. Similarly, the notion of voice can bring together both the kind of experience the *Cantigas* represent with their first-person texts and implied (if not actual) performance, the compositional practices that are used, and the people responsible for creating and then incorporating or subsuming individual pieces into the unified collection that we have today. The latter may be the work of many hands, and we still know little or nothing about those who contributed, but following those voices that do come through - whoever's they may be and whatever their role - represents our best chance of understanding what the collection meant to those behind it. Finally, the issue of the skill involved in the creation of the *Cantigas* has been a constant in much of the discussion here. As an orienting

concept, it prompts us to engage in detailed study not only of texts and music (how are those effects achieved? what are the challenges of composing within the constraints of the repertory?), but also of the manuscripts (how do their requirements affect individual pieces? what impact does editing have? can they tell us anything about the perception of a piece by the collection's compilers e.g. as more or less skilful?) and the relation of the *Cantigas* to the wider medieval context (how do the skills and challenges on show compare to those found in other repertories?). Taken together, these three themes - of choice, voice and skill - can make a substantial difference to the way we look at the collection and provide pointers as to future directions for research.

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